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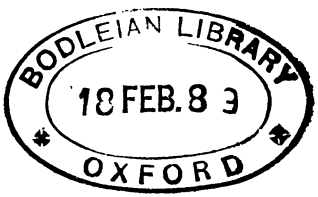
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NOTE.

THE grateful acknowledgments of the writer are offered to his Grace the Archbishop of Dublin, to Mr D. F. MacCarthy, and to Mr Fitzgerald, for their kind permission to make use of their versions from Calderon. Quotations from them are distinguished respectively by (D.) (M.) and (F.) Those from Shelley are marked (S.) For the other versions the writer is responsible. All the verse translations from Calderon in this book are in the metres of the original, with the exception of those taken from Shelley. Here and there prose renderings have been given; but the reader must bear in mind that Calderon never employs prose himself.

Great obligations have been incurred, in this little book, to the Archbishop of Dublin, whose admirable 'Essay on Calderon' is most valuable to the English student; and also to Mr D. F. MacCarthy, to whose interesting researches the writer owes much information.

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CALDERON.

INTRODUCTION.

GREECE after the Persian war, England and Spain after the discovery of the New World and the introduction of the new learning, produced, each of them, that rare thing—a great and truly national drama. But while the three mighty tragedians of Greece, and the English dramatist, whose splendour has eclipsed to our eyes many brilliant lights among his contemporaries, are something more than mere names to every person of even moderate culture in Europe and America, it is not so with the glories of the Spanish stage. The two men, who, by the consent of all Spaniards, occupy the two peaks of their Parnassus, Lope de Vega and Calderon, have paid for the enthusiastic admiration of their countrymen by the indifference of foreigners. And the vast number of inferior but still good dramatists who wrote the thirty thousand plays computed to have been produced between 1590, when Lope de Vega began his career at Madrid, and 1681, when Calderon died there,

seem, all but wholly, unknown outside Spain. Yet among them we find such names as Guillen de Castro, whose "Cid" was the model of Corneille's; Montalvan, author of the pathetic "Lovers of Teruel;" Guevara, who painted Castilian loyalty so well in the person of Guzman, in his "King before Kin;" and Tirso de Molina, whose "Deceiver of Seville" Molière was glad to copy in his "Don Juan."

The very abundance of their riches may have impeded the progress of the Spanish play-writers down the crowded thoroughfares that lead to posthumous renown. Lope de Vega's dramatic works of different descriptions were estimated at twelve hundred, of which about five hundred survive. Of Sophocles, the most perfect tragedian of Athens, but seven plays are left to us. It is easy to see how superior is the lighter-freighted bark's chance of reaching the distant, and desired, haven of appreciation in remote centuries and countries. Then, too, the intense nationality of the Spanish stage — the very quality which enabled it to flourish in the land of the Inquisition, despite the (at times) resolute opposition of the Church—has proved a barrier to the reception of its great writers abroad. Its strong individuality, which imposed its own forms on the court entertainments, instead of taking its tone from them, has displeased men bred to other ways and other thoughts. Ticknor justly remarks that "the Spaniards have always been a poetical people. A deep enthusiasm runs, like a vein of pure ore, at the bottom of their character, and the workings of strong passions and an original imagination are everywhere visible among the wild elements that break out on its surface." It is obvious, then, that this character must

be difficult of comprehension to nations more devoted to the material and the utilitarian; and that to them its results may appear fantastic. For, as the historian of Spanish literature goes on to say, "the energy, the fancy, which, earlier, produced the beautiful ballads of Spain, the force of national character which drove the Moors from Toledo, Seville, and Granada, called forth, directed, and controlled, in the seventeenth century, a dramatic literature, which grew out of the national genius and the condition of the mass of the people. . . . The Spanish drama, in its highest and most heroic forms, was still a popular entertainment. Its purpose was not only to please all classes, but to please all equally. Whether the story the mass of people saw enacted were probable or not, was to them a matter of small consequence. But it was necessary that it should be interesting. Above all, it was necessary that it should be Spanish; and therefore, though its subject might be Greek or Roman, oriental or mythological, the characters represented were always Castilian, and Castilian after the fashion of the seventeenth century, governed by Castilian notions of gallantry and the Castilian point of honour." Not therefore without an effort, can a reader of alien clime place himself at the right point of view from which to enjoy what so enraptured the people of Madrid two centuries ago. A theatre that did not model itself on the antique, which was uninfluenced by Lope de Vega's contemporary, Shakespeare, and which was founded on the strongly-marked peculiarities of a national character very unlike our own, may fail to attract at first sight; however curiosity may be stimulated by the promise of a drama which, "in many of its attributes and character-

istics, stands by itself;" and by the assurance of its gifted historian that, in studying it, we are studying "one of the most striking and one of the most interesting portions of modern literature." To the scantily recorded life, but voluminous works, of the most illustrious ornament of that drama, it is, nevertheless, the aim of the following little work to introduce the reader.

CHAPTER I.

HIS LIFE.

PEDRO CALDERON DE LA BARCA, the greatest of the many great dramatists of Spain, was born at Madrid on January 17, 1600. While he lay in his cradle Spain was the most powerful state in Europe; before his long life ended it was the weakest and most despised. His parents were both of noble family. His father was secretary to the treasury under two kings. It is said of both parents that they were "very Christian and discreet persons, who gave their children an education conformable to their illustrious lineage." Of these children (four in number), Calderon was the youngest. His only sister, Dorothea, became a nun at Toledo, and survived her brother one year. Of his two brothers, one died early, stabbed by an actor with whom he had had a quarrel; and Calderon seems to have lost the other when himself forty-five years of age. Sent to school at nine years old, and afterwards to the University of Salamanca, the young Pedro distinguished himself at both; leaving the latter at the age of nineteen, having amassed (says his biographer) "large stores of knowledge in geography, chronology, and history, alike sacred and

profane." Five or six years before this he had written his first play (now lost), "The Heavenly Chariot;" and there are reasons for ascribing his "Devotion of the Cross" to the time which followed close on his departure from Salamanca. His first published sonnet was in praise of St Isidore of Madrid. It appeared in 1620 among several other verses in his honour, and was praised by Lope de Vega; who, two years later, assigned the third prize to Calderon for a longer poem on the same subject. In 1622, if not sooner, a play by Calderon was acted at Madrid. This first had many successors. Some appeared in their author's absence; for the profession of arms which he had embraced kept him in the Milanese, or in Flanders, most of the years between 1625 and 1635. In the latter year, Philip the Fourth (himself a dramatic author) recalled Calderon to Spain, where he took at once the place in the public regard which the death of Lope de Vega left vacant for him. Made a knight of Santiago, and high in the king's favour, Calderon insisted on taking his part in the war of Catalonia in 1640; and is said to have quickly finished off a piece bespoken from him by the king, with the amiable design of keeping his favoured poet out of danger. The next year we hear of him as again at Madrid on a mission from the Count Duke Olivarez to his royal master; who also recalled him there once at least before the final suppression of the Catalonian revolt, to arrange the pageants which were to welcome his second wife, Maria Anna of Austria, to his capital in 1649.

Calderon seems never to have married. A few love verses of his have been unearthed by the diligence of

his biographers; but to whom they were addressed is unknown to us. In 1651 he did as his great predecessor had done—he took holy orders. Preferments, chaplaincies, honorary and otherwise, were bestowed on him by his ever-constant patron; to please whom he consented (a consent not disapproved by the Spanish prelates) to resume the dramatic labours which he had intended to relinquish at his ordination,—devoting them thenceforth exclusively to the royal festivities, and to the sacred rejoicings of the Corpus Christi festival. Philip the Fourth died in 1665. Calderon survived his patron sixteen years. To his earlier lyrics and longer poems on the Deluge, in defence of the nobility of painting and of the drama, he seems now to have added his, as yet, undiscovered poem, in octaves, on the "Four Last Things: Death, Judgment, Hell, and Heaven." His last secular play, "Leonidas and Marphisa," was written in his eighty-first year, as was, at the earliest, his *auto* entitled "The Divine Philothea." On the Whitsunday of 1681 Calderon, already mortally ill, roused himself, after receiving the last Sacraments, to endeavour to complete an *auto* for the coming festival at Madrid, as he had done for thirty-seven years past But the hand of death was upon him. He had to leave the task to another, and (in the words of his friend De Solis) "he died, as they say the swan does, singing." All Spain mourned for him. The weak King Charles the Second shed tears. Three thousand torches blazed at his funeral. Poems in his honour were composed at Rome, Milan, Naples, and Lisbon, as well as at Madrid. A fine monument, which has long since disappeared, was erected to his memory in the church of San Salvador.

In 1840, the church itself being in ruins, the great poet's dust was transported to that of Atocha; and its third, and, it may be hoped, final translation took place in 1869, when, with much pomp and ceremony, it was borne to the new national Pantheon, — the church of what was the Convent of St Francis.

Vera Tassis, Calderon's contemporary biographer, gives him this character: "His house was the universal shelter of the needy; his society was alike the safest and most profitable, his tongue the most candid and honourable, and his pen the most courteous of his century—for it wounded no man's fame by biting observations, nor ever stained the credit even of those who spoke evil of its wielder, any more than his ear ever gave heed to the malicious detraction of envy against others." No wonder that a man who united such an amiable disposition to an unrivalled genius, was the chosen and honoured friend of the greatest nobles of Spain, as well as the loved and respected servant of its sovereign. But the panegyrics, from which we derive this general information, condescend unfortunately to no detailed description of Calderon's life. We catch indeed a glimpse of him talking to a lively Frenchman on the rules of the drama, and allowing the admirer of Racine to go away with the notion that the great Castilian's "head-piece was but poorly furnished." We are told how he used to collect his friends around him on his birthdays, and tell them stories of his earlier life in camp and field; but, alas! there was no Boswell present to record them for us.

Having exhausted our other scanty stores of information, we turn to Calderon's portrait and to his epitaph. The first is grave and dignified,—the Cross of Santiago

on the breast, as befits the descendant of the early Christian champions, who came down from the mountains above Burgos to drive the Moors from their usurped country—the steadfast wielder of the pen (as his fathers of the sword) against the foes of the faith. The brow is lofty and capacious, like Shakespeare's; the large eyes, set wide apart under their finely-pencilled eyebrows, have a tender and thoughtful expression; the nose is well shaped and slightly aquiline, and the lips are well curved and rather full—again like Shakespeare's: only the look of keen penetration and strong latent humour in the Englishman's countenance is wanting in the Spaniard's more refined, and dreamier, face. The epitaph assures us that Calderon in his dying moments felt small esteem for his most admired secular plays—"Quæ summo plausu vivens scripsit, moriens praescribendo despexit." That something like this had been his judgment all along is confirmed by the fact that while he carefully published one volume of his sacred *autos* in his own lifetime, he, like Shakespeare, left his other dramas to their fate, only rousing himself sometimes to complain of the inaccuracy with which they were printed by others; so that, had not Columbus's descendant, the Duke of Veragnas, obtained a list of his plays from the poet, the troubles of his editors in ascertaining them correctly would have been endless.

As it is, one hundred and eighteen extant plays (including a few written in partnership with friends) are ascribed on good grounds to Calderon, while eight or ten await discovery. Of the hundred *autos* ascribed to him by Vera Tassis, we possess seventy-two.

It is evident, therefore, that Calderon did not work

with Lope de Vega's reckless haste. Though his life was the longer of the two, his numerous writings look few compared with those of that prodigal genius. Yet his drama embraces a wider range of subjects. His predecessor's great invention, the "cloak and sword" drama, flourished in his hands—its name derived from the national dress of the period, its personages from the upper ranks of Spanish society; its subject the dangers of courtship, while a father or brother is always on guard, weapon in hand, over the beauty whose dark eyes flash so bewitchingly from behind her grated window in the house or her mantilla in the street. De Vega's plays of "Common Life" are imitated, and surpassed, by Calderon in his "Alcalde of Zalamea;" while his "Heroic Drama" is continued by his great successor through the most varied epochs and the most distant countries, assuming its grandest proportions when it celebrates the heroism of Christian martyrs. Nor is this all. Mythologic legend, tales of early and late romance, all interesting stories wheresoever found, are dramatised by Calderon; while tragedy ever and anon steps in black-veiled and awful, to "ope the sacred source of sympathetic tears," or—at times—to freeze it by the chilling force of a horror beyond words.

Like Lope de Vega (though less than he), Calderon was apt to sacrifice his characters to his plot. The latter is in all his plays contrived and developed with the most admirable skill—a skill which made Schiller exclaim, "This poet would have saved Goethe and myself from many mistakes, if we had learned to know him earlier." The former often interest us more by what they do than by what they are; present to us an idealised portraiture

of national, rather than of individual, character; and—especially in the "cloak and sword" plays—bear a strong family likeness to one another. Goethe—much as he admired Calderon—once compared his dramas to leaden bullets all cast in the same mould; and (referring principally to the class of dramas above-mentioned, with their hero and heroine all love, honour, and jealousy, and their father or brother ever ready to strike if the gallant of the piece has even been seen in the house of his beloved) gave his opinion of him thus: "Calderon, splendid as he is, has so much of the conventional about him, that it is hard for an ordinary observer to get a sight of the poet's great talent through all his theatrical etiquette." There are doubtless exceptions to this in Calderon's plays; and I hope in the succeeding chapters to introduce the reader to more than one individual and strongly-marked character. But for the most part it is not so: Don Diego is very like Don Juan; Ines and Isabel closely resemble each other; and the best and most distinct of Calderon's creations do not grow and develop fresh traits of character under the pressure of outward circumstances as Shakespeare's do,—far less add, like them, vast stores to their careful observer's knowledge of human nature, or perplex him (as they too do at times) by the labyrinthine mental recesses which they unveil to his gaze.

Calderon's plays (unlike Shakespeare's) tolerate no admixture of prose. The buffoon (a *sine qua non* on the Spanish stage, and usually the hero's servant) expresses himself in the same verse, rhymed or not, as the master whose adventures he often parodies. But there is no wearying sameness in the verse employed. Cal-

deron's main reliance, like Lope de Vega's, was on the old ballad measure of his country, in which sometimes one vowel (oftener two) forms the rhyme, regardless of the differing consonants, for hundreds of lines. But, like de Vega, Calderon knew how to vary this *assonant* verse with other measures both Spanish and Italian—specimens of many of which will occur further on. The national *redondilla*, or verse with rhymes of the first and fourth and second and third lines, and the *quintilla*, which adds a fifth line, rhyming once more with the third, carry much of the dialogue: while in the more impassioned parts, other charming lyric measures alternate with the stately octave verse, or *terza rima* of Italy; not even Petrarch's sonnet failing to find due place. And Calderon knew how to employ each of these styles of verse with a master's hand. Their rich harmonies are an unfailing delight to the hearer.

Thus lifted by its external structure into a purely poetic region, the drama of Calderon vindicates its right to dwell there by its poetic conception of life, its high-wrought passion, and its gorgeous imagery. The spectator is wafted by its influence to a fairer country than that in which his common hours are passed—where the turf is greener, the flowers more brilliant, and the sky bluer than is their wont, and "where the scenery is lighted up with unknown and preternatural splendour. When Calderon succeeds, his success is of no common character. He sets before us models of ideal beauty,—a world into which nothing enters but the highest elements of his nation's genius. There the fervid yet grave enthusiasm of the old Castilian heroism, the chivalrous adventures of modern courtly honour, the generous self-

devotion of individual loyalty, and that reserved but passionate love which, in a state of society where it was so rigorously withdrawn from notice, became a kind of religion of the heart,—all seem to find their appropriate home. His idealised drama, resting, as it does, on the purest and noblest elements of the Spanish national character, with all its unquestionable defects, is to be placed among the extraordinary phenomena of modern poetry."[1]

In short, in Calderon's best plays we see the Spanish drama in its utmost exuberance of life, and can fully enjoy what no mean judge[2] has called "its inimitable beauty; the freshness of its inventions, the charm of its style, the flowing naturalness of its dialogue, the marvellous ingenuity of its plots, the ease with which everything is at last adjusted and explained;—the brilliant interest, the humour, the wit, that marks every step as we advance."

[1] Ticknor: Hist. of Spanish Literature, B. xxiv.
[2] Jovellanos.

CHAPTER II.

HIS HISTORIC DRAMA.

THE description which we have quoted from Ticknor of the Spanish drama will prepare the reader to find Calderon take many liberties with his historical subjects; whose heroes and heroines he had to transmute into Castilians in order to enable them to win the sympathies of his audience. The illustrious foreigners to whom he accords the honour of this naturalisation belong to many epochs of history, both sacred and profane; and to many different countries, beginning with Semiramis and ending with persons who, like the poet himself, were present at the siege of Breda. The history, learned at Salamanca, as well as the geography, are, when convenient to the poet, laid aside as he pursues his heroes' stirring adventures,—for he well knew that no spectator would rebuke him for placing Athens in Asia, or turning the Peloponnesus into an adjacent mountain, while his thoughts were engrossed by the love of Apelles and the generosity of Alexander. Coriolanus, Scipio, and Judas Maccabæus may amaze us, travestied as romantic lovers. To Calderon's audience nothing could seem more natural or more becoming; and it is to be feared that a play like

Shakespeare's "Julius Cæsar," in which no one makes love or is made love to, would have wholly failed to please them. Hence it comes that, while the great English and the great Spanish dramatist resemble each other so closely in the bold licences by which they startle the historical pedant, their aims in the plays they have drawn from history are so diverse as to preclude comparisons between them. Singularly enough, they have each written a "Henry the Eighth" from the point of view which each might be expected to occupy; and yet Catherine, the martyr-queen, is passed over by the Romanist, and honoured, as scarcely ever woman before or since, by the Protestant, poet. The "schism of England," closed by Wolsey's and Anne Boleyn's downfall, and by the proclamation of the Princess Mary as heiress-apparent to the throne, is Calderon's theme; Shakespeare's object is to paint

> "That majestic lord
> Who broke the bonds of Rome,"

in his weakness and in his strength; to contrast the differing results of self-seeking and self-forgetting in Wolsey and in Cranmer; finally, to hold up a mirror in which men might see reflected one of the greatest epochs, and most fruitful in great results, in his country's history.

Now Calderon, as will be seen further on, is most successful in his introduction of Spanish monarchs on the stage; but he does not take their reigns, as a whole, for his theme, as does Shakespeare those of English sovereigns: he could not venture on the freedom of handling requisite for such a plan — his own Castilian

loyalty and that of his audience alike forbidding it. The rulers of other nations he deals with simply with a view to the pleasure of his spectators.

Take, for an instance, his "Great Zenobia." There the beauty and learning of the Queen of Palmyra are vividly depicted; recondite authors like Trebellius and Vopiscus correctly copied in Aurelian's triumphal entrance into Rome, with his fair captive in her golden chains; and a soothsayer with ambiguous oracles is well introduced. The warning which Zenobia gives her captor in his hour of triumph to beware, by her own example, of the sudden reverses of fortune, is finely conceived. It begins thus:[1] —

"Morn comes forth with rays to crown her,
While the sun afar is spreading
Golden cloths most finely woven,
All to dry her tear-drops pearly.
Up to noon he climbs, then straightway
Sinks,—and then dark night makes ready
For the burial of the sun,
Canopies of black outstretching.—
Tall ship flies on linen pinions,
On with speed the breezes send it,
Small the wide seas seem, and straitened,
To its quick flight onward tending.
Yet one moment—yet one instant—
And the tempest roars, uprearing
Waves that might the stars extinguish,
Lifted for that ship's o'erwhelming.—
Day, with fear, looks ever nightwards;
Calms must storm await with trembling;
Close behind the back of pleasure
Evermore stalks sadness dreary."

[1] Assonants, *e*, *i*.

But the adventures of Decius, a Roman general defeated by Zenobia in battle, and the willing captive of her peerless charms; the disguise in which, to wipe off his disgrace, he follows Aurelian to the war, and saves him from captivity or death by his resolute defence of a bridge, single-handed; the nascent love in Zenobia's breast to which Decius owes his own life on that occasion; the treachery which gives the queen into Aurelian's hands, and the final catastrophe brought about by the vengeance of Decius for his ill-guerdoned services,—above all, the close of the play in which Decius, ascending the slain Aurelian's vacant throne, bids Zenobia share it with him and reign over the proud city which she so recently entered as a captive,—all belong to the romantic drama, and need for their enjoyment a measure of historical oblivion.

But if the chaste and noble Zenobia of authentic story loses as well as gains from Calderon's treatment, the great Semiramis steps forth at his call from her legendary cloud-land, a distinct and awful impersonation of human pride; to interest us by her strange life and to awe us by her fall, undisturbed and uncontradicted by any true chronicle of her times. That "splendid play," as Goethe called "The Daughter of the Air," which tells her story, is divided into two parts. The subject of the first is Semiramis exalted by her beauty to the throne of Assyria; the second contains her downfall. Menon, general of King Ninus, discovers to his own hurt the charms, which the guardian of the mysteriously-born maiden (knowing them to have been given her for the ruin of many) strives in vain to keep concealed. He asks his master's permission to wed her.

King Ninus looks; and bids Semiramis choose between his subject and himself. The ambitious woman chooses the monarch, and the unhappy Menon loses for her sake the king's favour, his eyesight, and, at last, his life. The play closes with Ninus and Semiramis seated on their thrones, while shouts of "Long live our Queen!" direct the recently-blinded Menon to her presence. There he generously opens his mouth not to curse but to bless her. But at that moment the gods interpose. A power greater than himself constrains Menon to declare to Ninus the death which awaits him from the fair "gilded mischief" who sits at his side. Thunders and awful portents confirm the truth of his saying to the shuddering king, and then the curtain falls.

The second part is supposed to open many years later. Semiramis is a widow and a mighty queen, the fame of whose exploits fills the earth. She dwells in Babylon the Great, adorned by her with sumptuous palace and hanging garden. Easily does she vanquish the King of Lydia, who, having wedded the sister of Ninus, appears in arms to claim the Assyrian throne for his nephew Nimias from his mother. This son, who perfectly resembles Semiramis in face, is in his unwarlike disposition wholly unlike her. But her people acknowledge his rights, and shout for a man to rule over them. Semiramis, rather enraged than frightened, yields to their request;—retires to the strictest seclusion in the recesses of her palace, and leaves Nimias to reign. But she soon wearies of inaction, and resolves to repossess herself of the throne by a stratagem. With the help of one trusty follower she has her son seized in his sleep and imprisoned in the solitary chamber which she has

quitted; then, profiting by his strong likeness to herself, she appears dressed in his robes to rule under his name. Soon men learn to tremble before the haughty and self-reliant bearing of the young king whom they had at first despised for his timidity. Nimias had assured Astræa, his tutor's daughter, of his unchanged affection. The false Nimias coldly bids her wed another. A soldier, who received a first instalment of reward from the new sovereign for having begun the tumult which placed him on the throne, comes for the second, and is ordered by the disguised Semiramis to be flung from a high tower; while she says, "I am wiser than I was yesterday, and see to-day that all movers of sedition must be punished." Above all, Lidoro, Nimias's unlucky uncle, who had been released by the young prince from degrading confinement, and treated with additional respect at the news that his son was advancing with an army to demand his father's freedom, is ordered back to his chains by the false Nimias; and told that he too shall be hurled from the battlements should the rescuing host dare to approach the walls. Yesterday Nimias had trembled at the thought of abiding such an adversary's attack: to-day his mien seems strangely altered; and the false Nimias, fired with martial ardour, sallies out at the head of his troops to meet the foe in the open field, and, as he says, to deal with the son as his mother dealt with the father. But Fortune, which has hitherto been so constant to Semiramis in the battlefield, deserts her when she seeks it in male attire. She receives a mortal wound in the conflict. Bleeding, with failing strength, she stands, withdrawn from the fight but still at bay; only her assailants are phantoms now,—the eye-

less Menon; the pale, poisoned Ninus; Nimias wasted by his dungeon. "Queen to the last," she resists even these; till, with the cry, "Daughter of Air, into Air I fade again," she expires. Loud are the lamentations of the troops over their valiant young monarch. But time presses; the victor is at the gates; nothing seems left but to draw Queen Semiramis from her seclusion. The door is burst open, Nimias comes forth, and the whole mystery is explained. Lidoro (escaped before from prison) willingly mediates between his preserver and his own victorious son; and Astræa regains her faithful lover, and shares his peaceful throne.

These outlines will suffice to show the merits and demerits of Calderon's ancient-history dramas. The finest of them is one taken from Jewish story, "The Hair of Absalom." Its main theme is Amnon's horrible crime and Absalom's vengeance for it; of which his rebellion against his father, resulting in his own death, forms the sequel. Skilfully as this, the third act, is arranged, it is surpassed in power by the first and second; which, taken alone, would be sufficient to stamp their author as a tragic poet of the highest rank. Very noticeable in them is the lull before the storm,—the pretty pastoral scene in which Absalom's sheep-shearers are awaiting Amnon and his brothers' coming. Among the peasant girls stands a veiled figure—the injured Tamar. The shepherds are singing:—

"Hasten, herdsmen, to the shearing,
Bleat of sheep and lambkin hearing.
Herdsmen, to the shearing haste,[1]
Where our head his shepherds wait.

[1] Assonants in *a*.

1ST SHEPHERD.

Happy are, from this day forward,
Sheep that drink where crystals lave
Liquid, flowery banks of Jordan,
Sheep on thymy salts that graze.
Herbs shall grow on all our meadows
'Neath the light of thy fair face,
For the fields in which thou walkest
Shall the hot sun parch in vain.
Why then art thou ever mournful,
Tamar, fairest of the fair,
Thou who by thine eyes' pure splendour
All our mountain glad hast made?
. . . . . .
Give thyself to pleasure, Princess,
And upon that beauty gaze
Here in mirror, to thee duteous
Offered by the crystal wave.

TAMAR.

Nay: I fear myself to see there.

2D SHEPHERD.

. . . . . .
See thy very portrait traced
On this river's faithful canvas,
. . . . . .
Which the flow'rets for thy sake
Well shall frame with gold and azure.

TAMAR.

I, if beauteous as you say,
Yet by one foul spot am tarnished;
Seeing it, I weep for shame.

2D SHEPHERD.

. . . . . .
That too help these watery mirrors:
Those to whom they show a stain

Stoop to wash within their waters,
And the spot away they take.

TAMAR.

If this spot could fade for water,
Here mine eyes their waters rain.
But such stain as this can only
Traitor's blood to cleanse avail.
. . . . .

TEUCA (*carrying a basket of flowers*).[1]

All these flowers, in beauty blowing,
I have stolen from the spring;
They are Love's interpreting,—
Vie with them, thy sweet charms showing.
Herbs and flowers, the freshest, fairest,
Here my basket full discloses;
Here are jasmines, here are roses,
Humble thyme, carnation rarest.
From the bright pink take sweet greeting,
See the sea-star's brilliant blue,
And the violet's darker hue,
Trodden by Love's foot retreating.
. . . . .

(*Gives her a nosegay.*)

TAMAR.

All these flowers of April's painting
Lose their colour, friend, near me;
Since that flower I long to see
Most, is to the nosegay wanting."

Soon David's royal sons are seen advancing to the rustic feast. A fresh act of insolence on the part of Amnon to the veiled shepherdess revives in the spectator's mind the memory of his former crime; and then he follows the

[1] In *redondillas.*

rest to the ill-omened banquet. Almost instantly cries are heard within, the doors fly open, and the guests are seen in confusion round Amnon lying dead on the banquet table, with Absalom standing sternly beside him, pointing out to his injured sister the blood which is flowing for her wrongs.

Only one of Calderon's plays from modern history is worthy to stand beside this fine tragedy. Its subject is the defeat and capture of Prince Ferdinand of Portugal, grandson of John of Gaunt; who, taken prisoner in an unfortunate expedition against Fez, refused to ransom himself at the expense of the Christian city of Ceuta, and died of the ill-treatment which that refusal brought upon him. In composing a tragedy on such a theme, Calderon had vast advantages, compared with his other historic subjects: in a time and a place neither hazy and indistinct from vast distance, chronological, geographical, or both, nor yet painfully clear; and yet more in the perfect sympathy which his audience were sure to feel with the disasters of an unsuccessful crusade and the sufferings of a Christian martyr.

The first scene of "The Constant Prince" is laid in the gardens of the King of Fez; where the song we hear from men working in chains is the song of Christian captives, to which the Princess Phœnix is listening. Presently the king himself enters to issue his command to his daughter to prepare for a marriage which he has contracted for her with the King of Morocco.

The underplot of the play is thus begun at once; for the princess loves her father's nephew and general, Muley. But the same scenes introduce us to the main business of the drama in the king's preparations to repel

the Portuguese army. At their landing Prince Henry happens to fall, and his brother Ferdinand, Grand-Master of the Order of Avis, cheers his soldiers whom the omen dismays, and shows his own confidence in God, by saying—

"These common portents, and these terrors vain,[1]
Come to win credence from our Moorish foes,
Not to dismay the knights of Christ's own train:
We two are such. Not here in fight we close
From vain desire of proud memorial,
That in the scroll of history brightly shows
When human eyes upon the record fall;
The Faith of God we come to magnify.
His be the honour, His the glory all,
If we with good success shall live and die.
Fearing God's chastisements men fear aright,
But no vain terrors wrap them when they dart;
We come to serve, not trespass in His sight,—
Christians ye are, as Christians act your part."

Thus, like Hector and like Hamlet, the Constant Prince "defies auguries," and with no better success than they; for, surrounded by the armies of the kings of Fez and Morocco, the small Christian host suffers inevitable defeat. "Let us do what we came here for—that is, die like brave men for the faith," says Ferdinand, rushing into the battle with the cry of Avis and Christ on his lips. Taken captive after performing prodigies of valour, we see him next treated as an honoured guest by the King of Fez; who confidently expects to have Ceuta surrendered to him by the King of Portugal in exchange for his brother's freedom. The mandate comes in due time. It was signed by a dying hand,—for grief at the

[1] *Terza rima*, slightly irregular

failure of the expedition and at his brother's peril hastened Edward's[1] death. But when Prince Henry appears with it, Ferdinand declines liberty at such a price. A Portuguese warrior, says this Christian Regulus, cannot so sacrifice a city won by his country's best blood; still less can a true believer allow its churches to be turned into mosques. So he tears the warrant, and prefers to remain a slave among the Moors. The King of Fez sees, with inexpressible rage, the coveted town escape him. "How can you dare keep it from me, if indeed you call me master?" he asks. "Because it belongs to God and not to me," is the grave reply. Foiled in his dearest hope, the king is implacable in his revenge. Not the martyr's death, which he has courted, but a life bitterer than any death, is to be the prince's portion. Meanly clad, scantily fed, and loaded with chains, he is sent to toil in the royal gardens; where the sharpest of pangs to his generous spirit arises from the disappointment he has caused the Christian captives, who beguiled their labours there by the hope of shortly sharing in his release. That Prince Henry, who hastens back to Portugal to rouse the nation's spirit by the story of her prince's sufferings, will return too late, and that only death can end them, the audience infer from an accidental omen. Phœnix, who has bidden a captive to gather flowers for her, is discussing with an attendant the meaning of a sinister prophecy which had doomed her to be a corpse's ransom. "Who," she asks, "can this dead man be, of whom I am to be the price?" "I," replies Ferdinand, as the spectators are meant to understand the word; though all the prince himself means to say is, "I

[1] A name difficult to recognise in its Portuguese disguise—Duarte.

bring you in these flowers the emblems of my fortune." And while the young maiden sees with surprise the once brilliant cavalier, who a short time ago rode so gaily forth with her father to the chase, in the pale and suffering man who stands before her, the prince expands the thought into one of the best of the numerous sonnets scattered through Calderon's plays :—

"These, which, to greet the day's first splendour waking,
Arose a gladness and an exultation,
Shall be at eve vain grief and lamentation—
In the cold arms of night their last sleep taking.
These tints that challenge heaven, new rainbows making
Of ordered gold and snow and deep carnation,
Shall teach us much in one day's brief duration—
Our brittle life with warning terrors shaking.
For as the roses early rise to bloom,
But, as they bloom, old age comes on apace,
Till in one bud they cradle find and tomb,
Even such like fortune waits the human race,
In one day to be born and die their doom ;
For hours, and ages, past leave self-same trace."

When the princess quits the garden, her lover, Muley, comes up to Ferdinand. He wishes to repay him for the freedom he once gave him by a like gift; and offers at last, when he finds he cannot accomplish it more cheaply, to give his own life to effect his deliverance. But honour forbids the Christian knight to accept this tempting offer, since its fulfilment would involve a breach of faith on Muley's part towards the king. He therefore decides against himself; and consents (to use his own words), for the sake of his God and his faith, to approve himself a constant prince in his slavery at Fez.

When the third act begins, Ferdinand has nearly finished paying in full the penalty of his self-devotion. The cruel king has exacted it from him to the uttermost farthing, in the vain hope of breaking his spirit and forcing him to yield up to him the much-coveted town. The spectator is prepared for the worst by Muley's account to his master of the fearful condition to which cold and hunger have reduced his captive—a minute and painful enumeration of physical suffering, not without precedent on the Greek stage, but repulsive to modern taste. It does not produce the effect on the king which the speaker desires. Ferdinand can deliver himself when he pleases, he says; his suffering is his own choice. And then his attention is distracted by the entrance of two ambassadors, one from Portugal and one from Morocco. The former has come to offer a large ransom in gold for Ferdinand. "Ceuta or nothing," says the king; and the messenger, who is Alphonso, now King of Portugal (come in disguise to do his own errand), retires to hasten the advance of his army to his uncle's rescue. The other ambassador discloses himself as the King of Morocco, come to fetch his bride in person; and the reluctant Phœnix receives her father's commands to accompany him back, escorted by the unlucky Muley.

But the audience cannot spare much pity for the young lovers' distresses. It is quickly bespoken for a worthier object. The scene changes to the front of the wretched hovels of the Christian slaves. Several of these come forth, with Ferdinand's two especial friends and self-constituted attendants, and carry him out, already in the last stage of extenuation from hunger and disease, to lay

him upon a mat in the sunshine. Then are heard the sublime accents of perfect resignation and thankfulness. Philoctetes in his anguish can do little but complain. Ferdinand can rejoice in his; because it is endured for the sake of One who suffered more for him.

FERDINAND.

"Lay me here, that so heaven's treasure[1]
Of pure light upon me poured
May the better give me pleasure.
Infinite and tender Lord!
Thanks I give Thee in full measure.
When, as I, Job wretched lay,
Of his birth he curst the day;
Meaning but to curse that sin
Wrapped in which we life begin.
But the day I curse not: nay,
Bless it for the grace God gives
With it to us; since there lives
Not one beauteous hue of light,
Not one sunbeam flashing bright,
But with tongue of flame it strives
Up my praise and thanks to send.

BRITO.

Is it well thus, lord, with thee?

FERDINAND.

Better than I merit, friend.—
How much pitying help to me,
Lord, dost Thou in mercy lend!
From chill dungeon when they lift me,
Thou, to warm my frozen blood,
With Thy glorious sun dost gift me:
Bounteous art Thou, Lord, and good."

[1] In *quintillas*.

The faithful Juan goes to seek for food, and the captives depart to their daily labour. Footsteps are heard approaching, and the prince, conceiving it to be his duty to lengthen out his martyrdom by every means in his power, begs food of the persons whom he is too weak to lift his head and look at; but who are, in fact, the king with his attendants escorting his daughter and his intended son-in-law a little way on their departure.

THE KING.

"Faith retained in such sad state,
Wretched and unfortunate,
Grieves, affronts me, more than all.
Master! Prince!

BRITO.

The king doth call.

FERDINAND.

Me? Thou errest: such my fate
That, nor prince nor master, nay,
But the corpse of both am I
Buried long in earth: then say,
'Prince and master formerly'—
Neither is my name to-day.

THE KING.

If not prince or master here,
Answer me as Ferdinand.

FERDINAND.

At that summons I appear,
Drag my frame, too weak to stand,
On to kiss thy foot.

THE KING.

Thy cheer
Yet is constant: I would know
Mean'st thou thus to yield, or brave
Still my anger?

FERDINAND.

I would show
All the reverence that should owe
To his master any slave."

And then the prince pours forth a long and earnest supplication for death. It is a speech which, however in harmony with Spanish tastes by its wealth of metaphors and grave reflections, is strangely long and artificial for the circumstances under which it is spoken. But it is noble throughout, and magnificent at the close. Ferdinand begins by imploring success in the suit he is about to prefer, from that magnanimity which ought to be inseparable from the kingly office. Even the lower creation is, he says, made generous by royalty; how much more, then, man? The lion tears not the unresisting; the dolphin rescues the shipwrecked; the eagle will hinder travellers from drinking of a poisoned spring; the pomegranate (queen of fruits), when envenomed, gives warning by turning pale; the diamond (king of stones) shivers into fragments at treason. What pity, then, may not a king among men be expected to show? a pity not restrained even by difference of faith, since all religions unite in forbidding cruelty. Yet mistake me not, he adds, as though I were trying to move thy compassion to give me life. It is too late for that, and death will be no surprise to me. He goes on:[1]—

[1] Assonants in the original in *u* and *e*, replaced here by *a*.

"Well I know that I am mortal,
That for man no hour is safe,
And it was for this that wisdom
One material gave and shape
To the coffin and the cradle.
. . . . .
At our birth this signal makes
Unto us the world of welcome;
That, within the cradle laid,
It secures us, sides turned upward;
But, when, in contempt or hate,
It desires to cast us from it,
Then its hands turn downward straight,
. . . . .
And what cradle was face upwards,
Coffin-grows when downward placed.
We thus near to death live ever;
Close is our last resting-place
As our cradle ever to us
From our birth. If such man's state,
What can one who knows this look for?
Not life; that at least is plain:
Death, 'tis death that now I ask for,
Having long desired to lay
Life down, if kind heaven would grant it,
For the Faith. Nor think despair
Prompts to this, of life made weary.
No; 'tis love, to yield up fain
Life in Faith's defence most righteous,
And to God an offering make
Of my life and soul united.—
But, if pity nought can gain,
Let thy wrath arise and smite me,
. . . . .
Vent on me thy fiercest rage,
Since, though hotter grow my torments,
Sharper yet these cruel pains,
Fiercer yet on me thy rigours,

Me, though yet worse miseries waste,
Though I yet worse hunger suffer,
Ragged, stripped of raiment bare,
Though I lie midst dust and ashes,
Firm I still cleave to the Faith;
For it is the sun which lights me
(Light that points my course out plain),
And my victor's crown of laurel.
Thou shalt no proud triumph take
O'er the Church: if such thy pleasure,
O'er me triumph here abased;
God will rise, my cause maintaining,
For 'tis His that I maintain.

THE KING.

Canst thou boast, and consolation
In thy very sufferings find?
How, then, speak my condemnation,
If they stir not my compassion,
Rousing none in thine own mind?
Since thy death from thine own hand
Comes, and not from my command,
Hope not any help from me.
Pity first thyself, then see
How I pity,—Ferdinand!" (*Exit.*)

The court follow. When the king and his train have departed, Juan arrives to give his friend a little bread, which he has braved cruel blows to obtain for him.

JUAN.

"Take it.

FERDINAND.

Faithful friend! But late
Is thy coming, for my state
Sinks to death.

JUAN.

High heaven, bestow
On me comfort in such woe!

FERDINAND.

On what ill does death not wait;
Since man lives of death the prey,
And in this his case perplexed,
Must be long by sickness vexed,
Growing strong at last to slay?
Man, beware! nor heedless stay;
Truth's attentive follower be,
Mindful of eternity.
Wait not till some other ill
Warn thee; surest far to kill
Is thine own infirmity.
Footsteps on the solid ground
Man at every moment makes;
Falls each step he onward takes
On his own sepulchral mound.
Sentence, that may well confound
Every heart, it is to know
That each step must forward go,
And be not reversed once taken;
By stern law, to which unshaken
God Himself cannot say 'No.'
Friends, mine end now comes on fast;
Lift, and bear me from this place.

JUAN.

Let me die in this embrace.

FERDINAND.

Noble Juan, hear one last
Prayer: 'tis this—when death is past,
Strip me of this raiment old,
Fetching from our hut unrolled
My great Order's cloak, by me
Borne through long years faithfully:

Bury me, wrapped in its fold,
Face unveiled, should, pityingly
Softened, the king's wrath endure
That I here find sepulture.
Mark my grave, for hope have I
That, although I captive die,
I shall, ransomed, lie one day
Where, by altars, priests can pray;
For, since I, my God, to Thee
Many churches gave, to me
One, I know, Thou wilt repay."

The audience feel that they have heard a martyr's last words, when Ferdinand is borne away to die inside his humble hovel; and the curtain falls.

It rises again on a brilliant scene, where arms are flashing and banners waving. It is the rescuing force under Alphonso, King of Portugal, led by himself and by his uncle, Don Henry; about to attack the King of Morocco on his way from Fez. Henry, mindful of former misfortune, counsels a prudent halt at nightfall, saying—

"See how already night,
The gloomy-shadowed, has day's chariot bright
In darkness hidden from our eyes away.

ALPHONSO.

Then let us fight without the day,
For at the Faith's clear call,
No force, no season, shall my heart appal.
If, Ferdinand, those pangs which thou dost bear
For God, to God thou offerest, pleading them in prayer,
Our arms must be victorious,
My work be praised, and His great name made glorious.

HENRY.

Thy pride misleads thee far.

Voice of FERDINAND (*from within*).

Attack them, great Alphonso! On to war!

(*A trumpet sounds.*)

ALPHONSO.

Hear'st thou a muffled cry
Piercing the winds which mournful round us sigh?

HENRY.

Yes; and with it I heard
The signal trump that to the onset stirred.

ALPHONSO.

Then to the onset, Henry! all persuades
That heaven to-day will aid our cause.

FERDINAND (*rising from the now thick darkness, wearing the cloak of his Order, and holding a torch*).

Ah, yes: it aids.
For heaven's favour, gained
By zeal of thine, and love, and faith maintained
To-day thy cause defends,
And thee to free me from my slavery sends;
Now that God offers me,
For churches many, one great church in fee.
Hence I with torch am sent,
Clear shining, lit at fountain orient,
Still to march on before,
Thy proud host's guide until the fight is o'er,
Till thou, with trophies great
As is thy wish, of Fez shalt reach the gate;
At the dawn's birthplace not thy head to crown,
But me to free whose sun went early down."

(*Vanishes.*)

The darkness settles over the army as it rushes onwards, and the scene changes. We are once more at

Fez. It is the next morning, and the king is standing stern, with lowering brow, over the coffin of his victim, and pronouncing the cruel sentence, that the man who has now effectually deprived him of Ceuta shall have no burial. Just at this moment the morning light shines on a victorious army, with several prisoners, advancing to the walls of Fez; yet, in spite of its victory, with muffled drums and other signs of woe. Its leader is a mysterious form, who vanishes, torch in hand, with these words:—

"I, by paths that no man knows of,
Through the horror of night's darkness,[1]
Safe have guided thee; now sunlight
All the murky clouds has parted,
And, victorious, great Alphonso,
Thou, with me, by Fez now standest.
Lo! at last the wall of Fez,
Treat before it of my ransom."

Trumpets sound to demand a parley, and the king looks down from the battlement in dismay on his daughter and her betrothed, the King of Morocco, now Alphonso's captives; who, standing forth, bids the King of Fez yield him up the Grand Master in exchange for them, or endure to see his daughter put to death. The king finds a difficulty in answering, and Phœnix, mistaking the cause of his hesitation, overwhelms him with reproaches. "Nay," he replies to her, "it is not that I begrudge thee thy life; it is mine that the stars are conspiring to take from me by slaying thee. Know, Alphonso, that the exchange which thou proposest is no longer in my power. This coffin holds all that is left of the prince. Kill my beauteous Phœnix, and let my

[1] Assonants in *a, e.*

blood pay for thine. I shall die myself soon after." "Not so," is Alphonso's generous answer.

> "King of Fez, lest thou consider
> That dead Ferdinand in value
> Weighs less than this living beauty,
> I for his dear corpse exchange her.
> Send me, therefore, snow for crystals,
> January for May the radiant,
> Withered roses for thy diamonds,—
> Yea, send death for beauty rarest."

The prophecy which marked Phœnix out as the "price of the dead" is thus accomplished. The king, as he delivers her to her father, intercedes with him in behalf of her marriage with Muley; the Christian prisoners are set free to bear their dead deliverer to the Portuguese fleet, while the brother and royal nephew—who sadly embrace the dear relics which are henceforth to be the sacred treasure of their cathedral—mingle gladness with their tears as they pay their reverent homage to the martyr.

So ends Calderon's finest historical play—a play the central figure of which is well worth comparing, and contrasting, with the "Hippolytus" of Euripides and the "Philoctetes" of Sophocles, as his noble features, perfected by suffering, meet us amid the crowd of Calderon's gallants, like Galahad's amid the knights of Arthur's court. Cousin, as he was, of the victor of Agincourt, English common-sense and sturdy courage look something prosaic beside Spanish chivalric piety, when we summon to stand together at the bar of our imagination the "Henry the Fifth" of Shakespeare and Calderon's "Constant Prince."

CHAPTER III.

HIS COMEDIES.

CALDERON'S comedies will not satisfy the expectations raised by their name in a reader's mind who takes his notions of comedy from Aristophanes or from Molière. A sense of humour was by no means one of their author's strongest points. The buffoons whom he introduces to diversify the more serious scenes of his grave compositions generally do their work but poorly; and their place in his lighter plays is neither more prominent nor better filled. He presents his audience at times with a genuinely comic character, such as his stupid and proud country gentleman, in the play entitled "Beware of Still Water," or his "Précieuse Ridicule,"[1] in that called "There is no Jesting with Love." But even out of such personages he is far from extracting the full amount of fun which Molière would have made his audience derive from them; and their appearances in Calderon's comedies are few and far between. On what, then, it may be asked, do these plays depend for their charm?—a charm so great, that at least one good German critic has given

[1] This lady, who calls her gloves *chirothecas*, and always speaks in cultured style, is the original of Molière's two cousins.

them the preference to all their many-sided author's other dramatic works. And the answer must be, that the attractive power which they possess arises from two sources—strong singly, in combination irresistible. The first is, the hold they lay on the spectator's curiosity. "Calderon particularly excels in the accumulation of surprises, in connecting one difficult situation with another, and in maintaining undiminished the strongly-excited interest to the close of the piece."[1] Thus all the satisfaction which can be received from witnessing a triumph of human ingenuity, is bestowed by the best of his comedies. And, in the second place, they delight us in a more durable manner by their poetic conception of life, by the high-bred tone of the thorough gentlemen and ladies who enact the principal parts in them, and by the brilliant rainbow tints with which Calderon's fancy enlivens even "cheap forms and common hues," when he is obliged to present them to us.

Ulrici has said that the pervading thought in Calderon's comedies is that of the vanity of earthly life. Certainly in them circumstances seem stronger than man—design fails where accident succeeds: strong purpose comes to nothing, and some sudden incident precipitates the resolve which will shape the man's whole future course. An unseen Hand is divined throughout them (scarcely felt), moulding into form

"Our ends,
Rough-hew them as we may."

Thus, though by another road, Calderon's comedies attain the same goal as Shakespeare's. To compare

[1] Bouterwek.

them (similar as their titles often are) would be an unwise and an ungrateful task. Something has already been said of that deficiency of humorous powers which disqualified Calderon from excelling in pure comedy at all; and most completely so from entering the lists against the prince of humorists. He could, indeed, place two loving couples even more hopelessly at cross purposes than Shakespeare's two pairs of bewildered lovers in "Midsummer's Night's Dream;" but the immortal troop of actors who rehearse their play hard by in the mazy woodland glades are beyond his reach. He has heroines in plenty, unjustly suspected, like the betrothed of Claudio in "Much Ado about Nothing;" but when has he succeeded in establishing their innocence by the intervention of a Dogberry or a Verges? Nor is it possible to place the best of Calderon's personages in comedy on the same line as even Shakespeare's worst, in point of individuality. Few of the Spanish poet's leave any marked trace in the spectator's mind at all; and, while Shakespeare need not fear to repeat the same incident in two comedies, because the people to whom it occurs are so different, Calderon's men and women are so like one another that all his ingenuity cannot protect us from a painful sense of sameness if we read too many of his comedies together. Read Shakespeare's thirteen, one after the other, and you will feel that in each you are introduced to a new world. Try the same experiment with Calderon's forty; and, instead of admiring the skill and enterprise with which Shakespeare each time reclaims and brings into cultivation a fresh piece of virgin soil, it will seem to you that you have but been watching an industrious market-

gardener getting a fresh crop every month from the same small plot of ground; that you have been walking in a trim Dutch garden, instead of surveying the "bowery loneliness" of some fair sylvan scene, beyond which the blue sea glitters with its suggestion of infinity.

This being so, a few typical specimens of Calderon's comedy will suffice. These are offered with one prefatory observation—namely, that the code of morals here observed (though not so completely the reverse of the ordinary one as that good-naturedly invented by Lamb for his Elizabethan dramatists) varies from the usual standard in some important particulars. It allows to a lady, or to a gentleman in a lady's defence, an unlimited privilege of falsehood; and it enjoins on a knight to draw his sword without hesitation for honour's sake (so-called), not merely against friend or brother, but even against the sister who has dared to follow the example which he has himself set her with the sister of some other cavalier. The reader who kindly bears this in mind will seldom find anything to object to in the conduct of the polished gentlemen who, in Calderon's dramas of the "cloak and sword," drape the former around them so gracefully, and use the latter so well; any more than in the demeanour of the dignified ladies for, or against, whom these swords are drawn. The world in which these fair creatures live would be, in truth, a goodly one, if it were not for the drawbacks just mentioned; for it is a world of brilliant sunshine and clear moonlights — of sweet blossoms and tinkling guitars: a world, too, if full of ceremonious courtesies, yet pervaded by real simplicity of feeling, shown by devoted friendships and by passionate love.

First let us look, however, at an example of Calderon's foreign comedy. "A Man his own Jailer" has its scene in southern Italy. Prince Frederic of Sicily has accidentally killed Prince Sforza in a joust held in honour of his cousin Margaret, Princess of Naples. Outlawed as if for a murder, he gets rid of his tell-tale armour; and, as a merchant in distress, is received into the household of Helena, sister of the man whom he has slain, and made custodian of her castle of Belflor. Meanwhile Margaret, who secretly loves him, is tortured by anxiety for his safety. Before long she is agonised by tidings of his arrest. But the man whom the king's officers have seized is, in reality, a very different person,—a foolish peasant, Benito by name, who found the prince's cast-off dress and put it on. The king, in deference to his loved daughter's wishes, promises to treat his captive well. The soldiers who took him say the prince must be mad, or else he feigns madness. The king sends for him, and, well pleased with his own skill in penetrating his disguise, regards Benito's vulgar pronunciation and manners as a piece of consummate acting; and tells him that his princely qualities shine forth like the sun from behind the clouds, in which it is his pleasure to veil them from sight. The respectful recognition of Benito as his master, by which Frederic's servant, Robert, seeks to insure his real master's safety, confirms the king in his delusion, and he sends the supposed prince to be guarded at the castle of Belflor; where the genuine Frederic, having the false one under his charge, becomes in a sense "his own jailer." To Belflor come soon after Margaret and her father; the latter desirous of terminating all disputes by a marriage.

Meanwhile Benito has been rising (like the renowned Christopher Sly) to an appreciation of the greatness that has been thrust upon him, and has got half-way to believing himself a prince in good earnest. He has overcome his awe of the state bed, whose magnificence he at first respected by sleeping on the floor; and indeed finds it so comfortable that he is very unwilling to leave it at all. The musicians who attend his levée perform music of a too high class for him, and he commits himself by asking them for a vulgar song; but he has learnt to like to eat off plate, and finds a prince's fare entirely to his taste. His education in princedom has made these small advances, when a visit from the king and his daughter is announced to him. Margaret speaks to Benito, but her speech is meant for Frederic. Her father, convinced on a closer inspection that the uncouthness of the supposed prince is natural, not assumed, looks with horror and amazement at his proposed son-in-law; and when Benito, having sent for chairs, coolly seats *himself* first, and says, "*I* am comfortable, and, since there are more chairs here than one, will your Majesty sit down?" whispers to his daughter, "Will you still praise his manners?" He is confounded by her reply, "They deserve praise. How gracefully he took his seat and motioned you to another. Fame lies: he is even more charming than he has been reported to be."

THE KING.

"'Tis not love; 'tis madness briefly
That to faults like his can blind.

MARGARET.

Love to madness near we find.

THE KING (*addressing* BENITO).

What has brought me hither chiefly
Is the wish to speak a word,
On your brother's coming here,
With your highness.

BENITO.

Why, I ne'er
That I had a brother heard.

ROBERT.

That the prince, your brother, will
Soon be here, he says, 'tis plain.

BENITO.

Says he "Brother, Prince"? again,
Not known here, so say I still.
'Tis your fault; who till to-day
Hid from me by silence bad
That a brother prince I had;
But for that you now shall pay. (*Beats him.*)

THE KING (*to* MARGARET).

Now, what canst thou say to me?
Is he courteous? is he wise?

MARGARET.

Why, his grace must all surprise;
None can make me laugh as he.

THE KING.

When man so ungraceful ever
Saw I? Can *he* win thy grace?

MARGARET.

Wrath looked good seen in *his* face.

THE KING.

Good! say'st thou? I swear that never
Will I yield to him thy hand,—
Not though, fighting valiantly,
With my people's blood should dye
His fierce brother all this land.

MARGARET.

Then (though I away must fling
Pride and dignity to own
My poor foolish love; made known
To my father and my king)
I my wish to wed proclaim,
From a love devout and true
Him, here listening in your view,
Frederic, whom as lord I name.

FREDERIC (*aside*).

Great my hope at such reply.

BENITO.

Sure this great good-will and love
Lady-cousin shows, must move
To my suit your Majesty.

MARGARET.

Is he not of Sicil great
Princely heir? then wherefore say
That my love has gone astray?

THE KING.

To a boor with addled pate!

MARGARET.

Nay, he's wise: the world has set
High his wit and bravery.

BENITO.

Truly great's the love that I
From my lady cousin get.

THE KING.

My confusion grows. How, how?
He discreet? 'Tis an abyss.
This a prince?

MARGARET.

Yea, surely; this
Same who sees and hears us now."

This diverting scene is brought to an end by the arrival of Frederic's brother; come to effect his deliverance either by negotiation or by arms. His surprise at hearing that the king's intention to marry his own daughter to his captive has been changed by that captive's imbecility, and his yet greater astonishment at having the uncouth Benito presented to him as his brother, may be imagined. The necessary explanations follow, and the curtain falls on a happy group; for Benito is dismissed to his peasant bride with a gift of two thousand crowns, to reward him for having been, as he says, the fiddler to whose music all the rest have danced.

The rest of this chapter must be devoted to the national comedies. An outline of some of the more complicated of these, with their endless series of surprises, such as "April and May Mornings," or "It is Hard to Guard a House with Two Doors," would fatigue the reader. "A Plague on Love" has a story which can be followed more easily. At its commencement Angela is doing her brother, Don Alvaro, the service of receiving with elaborate courtesy

Beatrice, the object of his affections. "How can you say you are out of spirits when you look so charming?" cries she. "What splendid hair, Louisa!" But when the handmaid, so appealed to, has responded suitably, there is a muttered "Never did I see a woman's head so ill-dressed," which makes Louisa exclaim to the audience, "Ladies, beware; our best friend praises us like that." Angela is entering on her brother's interests, and discovering what good progress he has made in Beatrice's regard, when a certain Don Diego comes into the room, with apologies for intruding on the lady of the house (with whom he is unacquainted), from his wish to speak with Beatrice. This wish is evidently not mutual; but the unwelcome lover perseveres, and proceeds to offer Beatrice a rich jewel which he pretends to have found outside the door, evidently dropped by her as she went into the house. "It is not mine," says the lady; having no wish to take a costly gift from a suitor whom she will not favour. "Let me look at it," says Angela; and after a moment's survey of the diamond she pronounces it her own; and, with thanks to the cavalier for its restoration, she hands it to her waiting-maid, bidding her fasten it on better another time. "I mean to punish him for his presumption in offering it to you," she whispers to Beatrice; while poor Don Diego, not liking to proclaim his little stratagem, sees his handsome present thus appropriated with a vexation which is not diminished by Angela's request that he would now depart, lest her brother should enter and be displeased to find a stranger with his sister. "He is just coming in," exclaims Louisa. "What does it matter?" says Diego. "I have only to tell him that I came here to give you your

jewel." "Not so," says Angela, "for it is a jewel that he does not know that I possess. Rather than make him suspect either Beatrice or myself unjustly, hide yourself in this adjoining chamber, and slip out as soon as he is gone." Diego has no choice, but must do as the lady bids him, ill as she has treated him. Don Alvaro, entering directly after and addressing Beatrice as a lover, adds jealousy to his other annoyances. "I think you will never contrive to find another jewel, if you get away safely to-night," whispers the waiting-maid to the unlucky man; when, after a ceremonious leave-taking, Beatrice goes, but Alvaro stays behind, so that the longed-for opportunity of Diego's getting quietly away seems as if it would never occur. "What is the good of not having a lover, if I am to be doomed to as many frights as if I had one;" says Angela, as her brother sits down and calmly begins to write a letter in the room which Diego must traverse before he can get into the street. Presently a clash of swords is heard outside; a cavalier and his squire rush in with naked weapons, and Don Juan, Alvaro's chief friend, appeals to him for protection. Newly arrived at Madrid, he has just killed a robber who assailed him, and is fleeing from Spanish justice, — more formidable often to the innocent than to the guilty. Alvaro goes into his sister's apartment to bespeak a bed for his friend, finds Don Diego, and instantly runs him through with his sword. He next turns on poor Angela, against whom appearances are very strong; but Juan defends her, saying that he will fight the dearest friend he has in defence of a lady's life. "Flee," he bids her, "while I can yet keep your brother from pursuing you." "Not so," replies Angela, boldly;

"I had rather die guiltless than live on condition of seeming guilty." Her brother, struck by her tone of innocence, stays his hand for a moment. Angela briefly explains the truth; and offers to die next morning if Beatrice does not confirm her story then. Peace is being restored on these terms, when a loud knocking is heard at the street door, and a notary and some alguazils enter. They have found a dead man outside, and have heard that his slayer is within. "There he is," says Angela promptly, pointing to the bleeding and insensible Diego. "He fainted from loss of blood, after imploring our protection; and we were so busy trying to restore him that we paid little attention to your first knocks." There is nothing to contradict her story. The man seems dying; so (sending for a confessor and a surgeon) the alguazil commends him for the night to Alvaro's good offices, and withdraws, satisfied with a promise to produce him should he survive till morning. Angela is locked up in her chamber till her innocence can be established; and Juan (whose love for Dona Beatrice was the magnet which drew him to Madrid, and who has made the unwelcome discovery that at least two lovers are courting her there) retires for the night exclaiming, "A plague on love!" to which his squire Hernando heartily says "Amen."

When therefore next morning Alvaro returns from an early interview with Beatrice, in which she has at once exculpated Angela and revealed her own affection for himself, Juan cannot share all his friend's satisfaction. He shares however his anxiety as to the next visit of the alguazils, who will find Diego recovered (he had only fainted from loss of blood), and able to give his own ver-

sion of the story. Hernando advises them to consult the lady whose cleverness he admired so much the previous evening,[1] and they proceed to do so. "Is my sentence life or death?" asks Angela. "Embrace me," replies her brother, "I have seen Beatrice; and your innocence is established." "Have you a single doubt left?" rejoins the lady. "No." "I was waiting for that," continues Angela; "Louisa give me my cloak." "What for?" questions Alvaro. "That I may leave you at once," is the answer, "and never hear or see you again. Now that you are at last satisfied, I am resolved never more to expose myself to your unjust suspicions." It is only at Don Juan's intercession that Angela consents to forgive her brother. She will stay, she says, to please the man who saved her life. As a pledge of pardon, she begins to discuss Don Diego's case with them; but is interrupted by his entrance, weak still, but anxious to leave the house in a sedan-chair. Angela bids the gentlemen withdraw; and, left alone with Diego, restores to him his unlucky diamond, and encourages his departure. Alvaro and Juan returning, are rather surprised to find him gone. Hernando makes an insolent speech about it, and Don Juan shows his nascent love for Angela by breaking his poor squire's head. Angela is kindly binding it up, while the friends go out for a healing salve, when the alguazils' second visit takes place. They want to take the wounded man's deposition. "He is so much better," says Angela, "as to be preparing to leave our house." She points to Hernando while she says so, whose bleeding head confirms her

[1] "Why, she lies as well as I could do it myself!" was his complimentary exclamation.

statement. "They cannot know much about this lady if they believe what *she* tells them," mutters the squire when they take him into custody, — an imprisonment which is, however, of short duration, as he is proved to have acted on the defensive. Through the rest of the play he retains a wholesome dread of Angela's cleverness; and when a veiled lady, who haunts his master, performs any unusually subtle trick, he never fails to say, "I think this must be another sister of another friend of yours." Hernando is wrong, however, for the mysterious fair one is Angela herself, as cunning on her own behalf as on that of others; and the comedy concludes in the usual way, with Alvaro gladly resigning the charge of his dangerous sister to Juan, and wedding Juan's first love, Beatrice, himself.

Another Angela, the heroine of Calderon's "Fairy Lady," is as full of devices as the former one, but not so boldly untruthful. She is a beautiful young widow living in her brother's house; who tells her one day of an expected guest, and, as he is a young cavalier, begs her to keep out of his way. This piques her curiosity. Soon after, her gratitude also is excited by the stranger. She has gone out rather indiscreetly (in the muffled and veiled style usual on such expeditions) to see some public rejoicings, has narrowly escaped recognition by her brother, and has got away safe owing to Don Manuel's interposition in her behalf. A secret entrance (known only to herself and her maid) leads from Dona Angela's apartment to the guest's. She profits by this to slip into Manuel's room several times when she knows him to be not within the house, and to leave notes behind her expressive of the grateful feelings of the unknown lady

whom he befriended. Her maid is more mischievous; she steals the purse of Manuel's servant and leaves ashes in its place. As the room has only one visible door which was never unlocked during their absence, these tokens amaze both master and man on their return. The master keeps his perplexity to himself, thinking that, if he showed his host the notes, some lady who possessed the master-key of the rooms might be compromised. His attendant is more frightened than perplexed. For to him it is evident that the room is haunted; and that by an evil fairy of far from honest disposition. Henceforth he declines to stay in it without his master's protection, and so leaves the coast more clear for Angela. Nor does even Don Manuel's protection always avail him. As they are entering their room one evening a mysterious form swiftly puts out the light carried by the servant, and leaves a note in his master's hand. This note is an answer to one left by Manuel where the fairy's billet was found by him; and contains the intelligence that he is in error in his first thoughts about her, as with her his host neither is, nor possibly can be, in love. Angela is still more nearly caught next time. Hearing that the cavalier has gone away for the night, she boldly carries a light into his room, where he has unexpectedly returned and is groping in the dark for some important papers. The beautiful apparition seems to the servant a response to the incautious wish he had just been expressing that the obliging fairy would come and hold his master a flambeau. But Don Manuel resolves to penetrate the secret, and boldly lays hands on the lovely vision. With marvellous presence of mind Angela promises to tell him all, if he will but close the outer door; and, the moment he

has turned his back, slips through the secret opening. Last of all she invites him to her own house on conditions—one of which is, that he is to be brought there in a sedan-chair of her own providing. In this he is carried by such devious ways in the dark, that he has no notion he is being brought back to his friend's house. He enters: a vision of beauty meets him. Angela stands, splendidly dressed, and attended by various handmaids, in a brilliantly lighted room, and bids him to a sumptuous collation. But his pleasure is shortlived; a knock is heard outside, and the ladies tell Manuel to withdraw. An attendant slips him through a door, and he finds himself in the dark. Some one stirs; he hears his own servant's voice, and discovers to his astonishment that he is in no distant quarter of the city, as he supposed he was, but in his own room. His servant's surprise is even greater, when an unseen hand draws him (by mistake for his master) through the secret door. The fairy ladies salute him as an Amadis or a Belianis, and gravely offer him refreshing drinks as a preparation for the two-hundred-league journey which they propose to take him. But to Don Manuel the discovery that the fairy lady is an inmate in his friend's house brings pain. He dreads to be accused of treachery. In a few moments more the sport in the adjoining room is turned to earnest. Angela has to throw herself for protection against her angry brother on his guest's pity. "No man shall defend my sister but her own husband," says the young swordsman. The spell the beautiful fairy has cast on Manuel is strong; and he readily assents to that condition.

The cleverness shown by the two Angelas in gaining a husband is put by Beatrice, in "To-morrow will differ

from To-day," to a more legitimate purpose. She employs hers in retaining the allegiance of her betrothed, Don Ferdinand; which has been shaken by the information of his cousin, Leonora, that Beatrice de Ayala, whose beauty and grace have delighted him so much at his first interview with her, has a gallant already in the person of Don Juan de Leiva. Now this Don Juan is in truth a brother, who has assumed a different name from the rest of the family, from which he lives apart, being on bad terms with his father; but who, nevertheless, meeting his sister from home under suspicious circumstances, has exercised his privileges as a Spanish brother and drawn his sword on her, in what the other lady (ignorant of their relationship) has fancied to be a transport of jealous rage. Don Ferdinand, divided between sentiments of love and honour, tells Beatrice's father that, owing to the dangerous illness of his own, he must leave Madrid instantly; and when pressed first to complete the marriage, responds with some coldness. Beatrice sees through the pretext; but, not knowing what the charge against herself is, keeps him in Madrid, to give herself time to discover and refute it, by writing to him notes from two imaginary ladies, each of whom desires a private interview. She enacts the person of each herself; and (in that of Dona Brianda) extracts from him the avowal that it is a favoured rival who is driving him from the city, "Have you seen him yourself?" she asks. "No; but heard of him from an eye-witness." "Eyes may deceive us as well as ears," says the unknown; adding in illustration—

> "Nought shows clearer to our eyes
> Than pellucid water bright,

Yet its clearness mocks the sight,
And within its depths tells lies.
For the proof let this suffice,
That the very shapeliest oar
Bent appears, though straight before,
Airy sphere for watery leaving:—
Where find truth then, if, deceiving,
Crystal clear tells truth no more?
Nought is more distinct to view
Than the sun's light, yet its beaming
Rays, in fiery lustre streaming,
Never to our gaze speak true.
One thing of the purple hue,
Other of the snow's they say,
Each time coloured diverse way,
As a different tint keeps dyeing:—
Where can we rest safe relying,
If deceives the light of day?
Nought looks plainer to be seen
Than that azure heaven on high,
Yet, in truth, there is no sky;
And that atmospheric screen,
Searched by eye both strong and keen,
Still its colour doubtful leaves:—
If the veil heaven's azure weaves
Is a falsehood, whither turning
Can we look for truth, discerning
That the very heaven deceives?
Therefore to reported ill
Ere thy full belief be given,
Take example from the heaven,
From sun's light and crystal rill,—
Touch the truth, deep hidden still
'Neath false semblance; if it borrow
Now dark shades to cause thee sorrow,
Boldly fling them off and wait,
Till upon thine altered state
Shines a better sun to-morrow."

It is no marvel that Ferdinand professes his ears to be as much charmed by the discourse of Brianda as his eyes had been by the beauty of Beatrice; and that he gladly gives her the ring which is to pledge him to remain eight days longer in Madrid, and her to reveal herself to him at the end of that time. In the character of her second incognita, the countess, Beatrice speaks with Ferdinand in the dark; and, on his expressing a wish to see her face, promises that he shall do so next morning at mass; and bidding him give her some token which she can wear for him to know her by, receives for that purpose his embroidered gloves. That self-same evening, however, accident brings her face to face with Ferdinand in her own proper character. He rushes unawares into her father's house to avoid a street brawl. "You still in Madrid!" says the lady, and then a few minutes after, "Your servant has told me your reason for staying there in secret," proceeding to give him the minutest particulars of his interviews with the two ladies. "Do not oblige me," says Ferdinand, "to say what I had meant never to utter in my life, that I had to fly from you; and that not because I loved another, or held discourse with her——" . . . "Did you not?" says a veiled lady, stepping forward. "Do you know this ring?" "No, lady," says the cavalier, surprised into falsehood. "If not," says another veiled damsel, "you will surely know these gloves." "You see that my lady the countess, and Brianda the discreet, are both here," says Beatrice. "It was my contrivance to detain you till the truth could be made clear to you." Don Juan de Leiva enters, and is made known as the brother of Beatrice; while his intended wife, Elvira, explains that it was

only through her complaisance in accompanying herself to a meeting with Juan that poor Beatrice incurred the wrongful suspicions which so nearly cost her her husband. Don Ferdinand humbly begs his lady's pardon, which is readily accorded to him.

In "A Poor Man is Full of Tricks," a man shows himself as ready in expedient as any of Calderon's women; but the shifts to which the poor and quick-witted Don Diego Osorio resorts in order to provide himself with money, and the skill with which he palms off a worthless chain on an unsuspicious lady as a valuable gift, are instances of sadly misapplied talents. For her wealth he is courting a rich heiress, Dona Clara; for his own pleasure he is carrying on a flirtation with the poor but charming Beatrice, to whom he is known by a feigned name,—that of Dionis de Vela. All goes well with him at first—indeed each lady is on the point of rejecting a worthier lover for his sake—when on one unlucky day they meet and exchange confidences. Clara is engaged in sounding the praises of Diego, Beatrice is loud in those of Dionis, when (little expecting to meet her there) the man who answers to both names enters the apartment. He starts at the unwelcome sight, but makes up his mind with admirable promptness, and comes in, bowing affectionately to Clara and ceremoniously to Beatrice; whose name as a perfect stranger he inquires of her friend. Beatrice concludes from this that her lover for some reason does not wish to acknowledge her before Clara. To secure a moment's speech with him she pretends to faint. The lady of the house goes to fetch a glass of water, and Beatrice begins her reproaches; but, to her consternation, they are met by a

polite assurance that she is mistaken: the chain she is wearing was not the gift of the cavalier now before her; he never even heard the name of Dionis de Vela; in fact, he is not aware that he ever saw her in his life. Poor Beatrice leaves her friend's house annoyed and bewildered, but by no means convinced. She is made to doubt the evidence of her own senses, however, by a confederate of Diego's; who remarks in her presence that he has just met his friend's double in the street, and ascertained that another gentleman in Madrid is so exactly like Dionis that they are being constantly mistaken for one another. Ines, the waiting-maid, completely taken in by this, remarks that the gentleman whom they saw at Dona Clara's is certainly unlike Don Dionis in several respects, particularly as to height. But Beatrice, though shaken in her conviction, is not fully satisfied, and determines to test the story. So she writes to appoint 3 P.M. as the hour when Dionis is to visit her next; and then arranges with Clara to send her a jewel, which she wants to borrow, at the same hour of the same day by the hands of Don Diego. This is a very clever plan, but the double-named cavalier is cleverer still. He secures the services of an obliging alguazil, employs a man dressed as a gentleman to feign a quarrel with himself; is seen by Beatrice fighting with him under her window a few minutes before three o'clock, and then marched off under custody towards the prison; and, having thus disposed of Don Dionis, he changes his dress with incredible swiftness, and enters Beatrice's apartment (jewel in hand) at the prescribed hour in the character of Don Diego. Beatrice is at last perfectly satisfied; and, having no longer cause to feel jealous of

Clara, goes out with her into the park, and begins to tell her of the curious resemblance between their lovers. At this moment they see Diego advancing with four others; and, suspecting the truth that one or more duels are about to be fought, hide themselves and watch. They hear Leonelo, Clara's faithful lover for the past two years, challenge the man who is supplanting him in her good graces by the name of Diego Osorio; and Don Felix, who loves Beatrice, defy him for a similar reason by the name of Dionis de Vela. And they hear both challenges accepted with the cynical avowal that there is no shame in using stratagems with ladies.

Beatrice at once comes out of her concealment and gives Felix her hand, bidding her tricky suitor return and tell his friends at Granada how the ladies at Madrid like his stratagems. "If I have lost her sovereign beauty," says Diego on their departure, "at least I may hope for Clara's wealth;" and he begins his duel with Leonelo. "Learn the advantage of telling ladies lies," says Dona Clara to him, coming forth in her turn from her hiding-place; "there is my hand, Leonelo."

There is some genuine fun in "The Feigned Astrologer" (copied at second-hand by Dryden); where the gentleman, who has pretended to have discovered a lady's secret by his knowledge of the stars, is perpetually pestered by requests from ridiculous applicants to exercise for them the skill which he has falsely claimed.[1] There

[1] This play, as well as "The Fairy Lady" and "The Phantom Gallant," show Calderon's freedom from the vulgar superstitions of his day. He could believe in the apparition of a departed saint as a miracle worked for some adequate cause; but from spiritualistic follies, belief in ghosts, witchcraft, or goblins, his sound religious faith protected him.

is much also in "Beware of Still Water,"—a play in which the two contrasted sisters probably gave a hint for Molière's "École des Maris,"[1] as his M. de Pourceaugnac is a remote relation of its fatuous country-gentleman, Don Torribio. As the head of his family, the father of Clara and Eugenia allows him to choose between his daughters, and when his choice has fallen on the younger, commands her to accept him.

"*Torribio (entering).* How lightly steps a favoured lover forth! Give you joy, cousin.

Eugenia. The wretch!

Tor. Being selected by the head of your house.

Eug. Sir, one word. I wouldn't marry you if it should cost me my life.

Tor. Ah, you are witty, cousin, I know.

Eug. Not to you, sir. And now especially I mean to tell you sober truth, and abide by it; so you had better listen. I tell you once again, and once for all, I wouldn't marry you to save my life!

Tor. Cousin! After what I heard you tell your father?

Eug. What I said then was out of duty to him, and what I now say is out of detestation of you.

Tor. I'll go and tell him this,—I declare I will.

Eug. Do, and I'll deny it. But I mean it all the same, and swear it.

Tor. Woman, am I not your cousin?

Eug. Yes.

Tor. And head of the family?

Eug. I daresay.

Tor. An Hidalgo?

Eug. Yes.

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[1] Molière took more than one hint from Calderon. In "The Loud Secret" of the latter we find the misplaced confidences of his "École des Maris," only made under circumstances of greater probability.

Tor. Gallant?

Eug. Very.

Tor. And disposed to you?

Eug. Very possibly.

Tor. What do you mean then?

Eug. Whatever you choose, so long as you believe I mean what I say. I'll never marry you. You might be all you say, and fifty other things beside; but I'll never marry any man without a capacity. (*Exit.*)

Tor. Capacity! Without a Capacity! I who have the family estate, and my ancestors painted in a row on the patent in my saddle-bags! I who——

Enter ALONSO.

Alon. Well, nephew, here you are at last. I've been hunting everywhere to tell you the good news.

Tor. And what may that be, pray?

Alon. That your cousin Eugenia cordially accepts your offer, and——

Tor. Oh indeed, does she so? I tell you she has a very odd way of doing it then. Oh, uncle, she has said that to me I wouldn't say to my horse.

Alon. To you?

Tor. Ay, to me—here—on this very spot—just now.

Alon. But what?

Tor. What? why, that I had no Capacity! But I'll soon settle that. I either have a Capacity or not. If I have, she lies; if I have not, I desire you to buy me one directly, whatever it may cost.

Alon. What infatuation!

Tor. What, it costs so much, does it? I don't care. I'll not have it thrown in my teeth by her or any woman; and if you won't I'll go and buy a Capacity, and bring it back with me, let it cost—ay, and weigh—what it will." (*Exit.*) —(F.)

The other scenes in this diverting play—in which the cautious and reserved Clara takes the dangerous steps

on which the frank and seemingly thoughtless Eugenia would not venture, and in which Don Torribio, hopelessly bewildered by the sight of his cousin's farthingale (which he mistakes for a scaling-ladder), and generally disgusted with life in Madrid, sets off at last on his return to his ancestral mansion, leaving the coast free to a more suitable bridegroom—must be left to the reader's imagination.

CHAPTER IV.

HIS MYTHOLOGICAL PLAYS.

CALDERON, when preparing grand spectacular entertainments for his royal patron, seems frequently to have had recourse to Ovid's 'Metamorphoses' for a subject. Beautiful stories like those of Cupid and Psyche, or Perseus and Andromeda, had an especial attraction for him; and we find him dramatising these and many more, —sometimes, as in the case of the last-named, as operas, to be sung throughout, but at all times as works to be placed on the stage with every advantage that could be derived from musical accompaniment and from gorgeous scenery. We, therefore, read these plays of his in the closet at a considerable disadvantage; and a few extracts from three of the seventeen classic fables so used by Calderon must suffice to show how parallel was his handling of them to that of Titian in the sister art of painting.

Take, for instance, the fine scene in "The Statue of Prometheus;" in which the cold white marble which represents Minerva, has placed in her hand by her grateful devotee the torch lit by Apollo's rays, which he has stolen to do her honour. Wakened into life by its

touch, the first woman steps forward bewildered by her new consciousness; "suddenly tossed," so she expresses it, "to a strange shore on the ocean of existence." The dwellers on the earth do her homage as the goddess of their mountains. To her, the daughter of fire, they hasten to offer the flowers of the earth and the pearls of the water, the foremost singing—

"With this beauteous garland gay
Setting on thy brow divine,
Roses (least of which shall shine
Like a star with fragrant ray),
Homage unto thee to pay,
Now from all her verdant bowers
Comes the earth with flowers, with flowers."

While the representative of water responds with—

"Drops congealed, on ocean born
Of the white and curdling foam,
Shining in the face of morn,
Strung as necklace to adorn,—
Or to gain new beauty, worn
On thy throat of purest white,—
Water pearls brings, pearls of light."

Or, again, let the reader listen to the snatches of song early on in Calderon's lovely "Echo and Narcissus;" when remorseless fate has revealed the fair boy Narcissus (jealously hidden by his mother Liriope) to the nymphs who are seeking him through the woodland.

1ST NYMPH.

"Tell me where Narcissus is,
Flow'ret and fountain!

2D NYMPH.

Tell me where Narcissus is,
Woodland and mountain!

1ST VOICE.

Love's deceit betrays the heart,
Love's rejection's frank and true;
This for hurtless smart I knew,
That for hurt which did not smart.

2D VOICE.

Come, death, come! but hide thee well;
Come with muffled foot, lest I
Be so very glad to die,
That the joy should make me well."[1]

So foreshadowed, this meeting of Echo with Narcissus bears its well-known fruit of sorrow. Her rejected love bewilders her brain, till she is only able to repeat the last words of each sentence that she hears: while those words, borne on the breeze, strike the ear of Narcissus when he pines for the beautiful face he has seen in the fountain — the naiad (as he thinks) whom no sweet music, no fond entreaty, can move to rise from its cool depths into his arms—with a sentence that dooms him to despair; and thus the hapless lover and beloved pine away, till of the last is left nothing but the fair Narcissus-flower, of the former nothing but the cave-haunting voice.

In this play, as well as in his "Prometheus," Calderon lets the warm hues of modern romance suffuse the cold

[1] This quatrain—a great favourite with Calderon—was the composition of Escriva. Further on we shall see him quote a song of Gongora's, as Shakespeare did the English ballads.

marble of classic art with no unwelcome rosy tint. In his "Circe and Ulysses" (Love the greatest of Enchantments) he goes further; and recalls the most incongruous of mediæval romances by making Circe's court ladies discuss, with their Greek admirers, the important question, "Which is hardest, to hide or to feign love?" and by a ludicrous scene, in which one of Ulysses' attendant buffoons who has affronted the enchantress finds, to his horror, a dwarf and a duenna in the box of treasures which she has bestowed upon him; while the other buffoon, who has won her approval, has only to dip his hand into the same chest to extract from it the richest gems. Calderon is, however, not responsible for the whole of this play. Two colleagues aided him in preparing it for a sumptuous Whitsuntide festival, given by Olivarez to his royal master at the palace of the Buen-Retiro. The court viewed the spectacle from boats on the large pond, in the centre of which rose an artificial island, decorated with mother-of-pearl, coral, and rare shells, and surmounted by the gorgeous palace of Circe; the final vanishing of which was a masterpiece of stage effect. The turning-point of the drama is when the armour of the dead Achilles (awarded to Ulysses by the grateful Greeks) is borne in by his anxious followers to rouse their chieftain from his fatal oblivion of duty: a fine use of the legend of the discovery of Achilles himself at Scyros,—so skilfully applied by Tasso to his Rinaldo. The scene will give the reader a good idea alike of Calderon's strength and weakness in his management of classic subjects. Circe is absent. Ulysses sleeps. Three friends awake him by laying the armour at his feet.

TIMANTHES.

"Mute may it recall the round
Of the battles that he won,
Of the fields he stood upon
With the victor laurel-crowned;
May it from delusive charms
Wake him soon to manlier deed.

ARCHELAUS.

He who heeds no voice, may heed
The reproachful rust of arms.

POLYDORUS.

Trophies of a realm subdued,
Trophies, Troy in ashes weeps,
Since along your bright mail creeps
Still the sweat of Trojan blood;
No base stain of low desire
Let disgraceful love fling o'er you;
Wake, by thoughts of him who bore you,
Dead Achilles' martial fire.

(*Exeunt.*)

ULYSSES (*waking*).

. . . . . .

All too late, forgotten trophy
Of true valour, dost thou come here,[1]
Succour 'gainst myself to give me;
Since though 'gainst myself thy succour
Giv'st thou, in this fane suspended
Must thou here remain, where buried
Shall thy memory be forgotten.

SHADE OF ACHILLES (*from below*).

Mock them not; do not insult them.

[1] Assonants in *u* and *e*.

ULYSSES.

Ah! what voice is this that makes me
In my inmost heart to shudder.
(*A tomb arises, and in it is* ACHILLES *covered with a veil.*)
O dread shape, that in light ashes,
Which not even the wind disturbeth,
Liest in this sepulchre,
Say, who art thou?

ACHILLES.

That all further
Doubt may end, this black veil lift,
And my countenance discover.
(ULYSSES *raises the veil.*)
Dost thou know me?

ULYSSES.

If I may
Trust the tests wherewith to judge the
Ashy paleness of thy face,
Which no eye can see untroubled,
And thy stiffened skeleton,
Which, though maimed, retains such lustre,
Thou Achilles art, Achilles.

ACHILLES.

I his spirit am, so bruited,
Who from the Elysian fields, my
Everlasting home and country,
Have passed through the green and azure
Waves of Acheron, thick gummy
Molten mires of fire and brimstone,
Pools of nitre and of sulphur,
To reclaim once more my arms,

So that Love may never judge them
Of his temple the proud spoil,
Idle, all forgot, and useless;
For the Gods no longer wish
That another lord should rust them,
But that, buried in my tomb,
They should last while years are numbered.
And, oh thou effeminate Greek,
Who, amid the soft indulgence
Of weak love, so many splendours
In thick ebon shades dost cover,—
Not in amorous enchantments
Shouldst thou let them lose their lustre,
But the magic-woven web
Of love's passionate joys and troubles
Breaking, fly Trinacria, and
Treading the sea's glass-blue surface,
At the wind's discretion scud
O'er those level lawns they ruffle;
For it is the Gods' decree
That once more your curved prow cuts them,
Till the funeral altars, standing
By my far tomb, thou salutest,
And in it these arms suspendest."—(M.)

With this play it is interesting to compare Calderon's *auto* on the same subject, "The Sorceries of Sin," in which fine moral and spiritual truth is drawn from the tale of Circe. Here the myth becomes an allegory: Ulysses is the type of man sailing across "the waves of this troublesome world," with Understanding and the Five Senses for his companions; Sin is the Circe who debases and brutalises them; Penitence, the heaven-descended Iris who enables man to reclaim his senses from Sin's power. And this is one example only among many in the Spanish drama of Greek fable put to Christian

uses. As in the Sistine Chapel the Sibyls are intermingled with the Prophets, the pagan with the Jewish heralds of the advent of Christ, so in the *autos* of Calderon we are frequently invited to see Him foreshadowed, not merely by Hebrew type but by Hellenic legend. He, in the *auto* called "Perseus and Andromeda," is the Deliverer come down to free Human Nature from her chain, and to save her from the devouring monster; He is the true Theseus who overcomes the Minotaur, the divine Orpheus who goes down into Hades to fetch back the prey which He has wrested from it; He is "the true God Pan," and, in two *autos* on the subject of Cupid and Psyche, He is set forth to us as the invisible object of His Church's love, lost to her when she prefers sight to faith, but regained by her penitent search. "The manner in which Calderon uses the Greek mythology is exceedingly interesting. He was gifted with an eye singularly open for the true religious element which, however overlaid and debased, is yet to be detected in all inferior forms of religion. These religions were to him the vestibules through which the nations had been guided, till they reached the temple of the absolute religion, where God is worshipped in Christ. . . . He took a manifest delight in finding, or making, a deeper meaning for the legends and tales of the classical world, seeing in them the symbols and unconscious prophecies of Christian truth."[1]

Considerations like these make the classic *autos* of

[1] Archbishop Trench.

Calderon more attractive to thoughtful minds than that portion of his secular drama which draws its inspiration from the same source. But alike in each we see the legends of antiquity recast by a fervid imagination, and renewed into a vigorous, if a less graceful, youth than that which was theirs in the spring-time of the world.

CHAPTER V.

HIS SACRED DRAMAS.—"DEVOTION OF THE CROSS:" "PURGATORY OF ST PATRICK."

CALDERON'S sacred and legendary dramas fall into several groups. One set (of which only two are generally accessible) are dedicated to the honour of the Virgin; a second to that of the Cross; a third depict the introduction of the Faith to barbarous regions; a fourth (and most interesting) the sufferings of its first confessors. The most sacred subjects are handled in these plays with great, though not irreverent, familiarity; while in their lighter portions the inevitable lovers interest, and the irrepressible buffoon entertains, the audience, precisely as they do in Calderon's secular plays. Events so near their author's time as the conquest of Peru and the career of Ignatius Loyola supply themes for two of them; while in others the spectator is carried back to the days of the apostles, or to the far earlier period of those twilight glimmerings which preceded the rising of the Sun of Righteousness.

"Dawn in Copacabana" is an interesting play in honour of the Virgin; who appears in it in glory to cast snow on the fires kindled by the enraged Peruvians to destroy Pizarro and his men. Hopeless of human

aid, the Spaniards call on their celestial patroness, and straightway the fires are extinguished. The hero and heroine of the play are Yupanqui, a young Peruvian, and his beloved Guacolda, priestess of the sun, and loved in vain by the last unfortunate Cacique of Peru. The natives, alarmed by the sight of the Spanish ships and by the sound of the Spanish cannon, draw lots for a human victim[1] with which to appease their sun-god. The lot falls on Guacolda; who, abandoned, after a faint struggle, to her fate by her royal lover, bitterly bewails the hardship of having to die for a god who, as she says, would not die for her. Yupanqui risks his life to save hers, and is doomed to perish along with her. But Guacolda flees to a cross set up on the Peruvian coast by adventurous Spanish hands as a token of possession, and already reverenced by the natives, who have seen with fear and wonder the wild beasts crouching before it: she grasps it, and her enemies are unable to drag her from its embrace. Soon after, the victorious advance of Pizarro and his men rescues the two lovers, and enables them to receive baptism in the name of Him who did not refuse to die for His own creatures.

Between these events, which fill the first two acts, and the opening of the third, many years are supposed to have elapsed; for the curtain rises on a Christian country, and on the eve of a great festival, for which Yupanqui is labouring to finish a statue of the holy Virgin. With a mind deeply impressed by that sacred beauty which was revealed to him, when he, in common with many

[1] Here, and elsewhere, Calderon appears to confound the gentle and inoffensive manners of the Peruvians with those of the more cruel Mexicans.

others, saw her appear to rescue Pizarro's army and himself, Yupanqui has been long and diligently striving to frame her likeness as he beheld her then. Toiling night and day at his pious task, he has only failure for his reward; since, wanting the skill to carry out his good intentions, he finishes his statue indeed, but so badly that it only provokes the beholders to derision. Disappointed, but hopeful still, the Peruvian prays earnestly for help to do better; and then, as a last resource, expends all his wealth in getting the ill-shapen image gilded. Next morning a religious confraternity are to come and bear it to its place in the Governor's presence, if only it can be found in any sort worthy of the honour designed for it. But Yupanqui's last look at it over night makes his heart sink. In spite of adornment and outlay, he fears the most partial judgment must reject it as ill-favoured. However, mightier artists come to his aid. The Virgin accepts his sincere devotion, and sends down a company of angels, who labour through the night, with holy hymns of joy, to retouch the image of the Madonna and her Child; so that when morning comes, and the vast crowd have assembled, the malevolent prepared to scoff at Yupanqui's failure and the well-disposed to pity it, and he with a trembling hand lifts up the curtain which hangs before his workshop, all are thrilled with awe, all (and most of all the artist) are filled with unexpected joy; for there stands in all her glorious beauty "The true Dawn bearing the true Sun," the holy mother embracing her heavenly Infant!

Calderon's plays in honour of the Cross begin early; for the first of them, "The Sibyl of the East," is founded on the legend (invented in Christian days) concerning

the Queen of Sheba's visit to Solomon. This legend reverses their relative positions, making her rather the bestower than the receiver of the highest wisdom. Strange visions lead the royal lady to quit her own country; the destined instrument of man's redemption, which is the same tree that caused his fall, is lying uncared for and rejected by the builders of the Temple, when its true nature is revealed to her by a miracle, and, in mystic strains full of oriental hyperbole, she shows it to the amazed king, and celebrates by anticipation the discovery of the True Cross.

Its recovery in after ages is the theme of another play, "The Exaltation of the Cross." Here the priceless relic has fallen into the hands of Cosrhoes, King of Persia. The Christian emperor, Heraclius, marches with an army to regain it. He is defeated and surrounded by his enemy's forces. Then Cosrhoes offers life and liberty to him and to his troops, on condition of their apostatising from the faith. The proposition is rejected with noble scorn; and the emperor and his men betake themselves to prayer. It is answered; for when they prepare to sell their lives as dear as they can in battle, their defeat is turned to victory. They recover the Cross from its heathen possessors, and Heraclius returns in triumph to place the wood which all Christendom reveres in the basilica of Constantine and of Helena at Jerusalem.

The profound reverence for the visible Cross which is the basis of these two plays is, alas! well known to have been compatible in many Christians, in many ages, with the profoundest disregard for all that the Cross signifies, —except bare immunity from punishment. Such a disregard is unfortunately the marked characteristic of the

superstitious popular legend, dramatised by Calderon in his "Devotion of the Cross"—a story of which the apparent teaching is, that the most wicked life, if combined with a certain number of outward mechanical acts of piety, will not exclude the sinner from everlasting bliss. Certainly when, at its end, the robber Eusebio dies the death of the righteous after all his frightful crimes, men may well ask whether its writer ever weighed the inspired declaration that the Cross was erected that men, "being dead unto sin, should live unto righteousness;" and exclaim with Coleridge against the antinomianism of the Romanist. Perhaps, on further consideration, some may be inclined to pronounce a more favourable judgment, — to hope that the author only meant to teach us how a lingering spark of good may smoulder on in the worst breast, to burst at length into flame at the touch of divine grace; how while there is life there is hope even for the most evil; how it is literally never too late to mend,—even if for that amendment, so far as man's eye can reach, but a momentary space is left. It is a question not to be decided here. The following is an outline of the play which raises it.

Lisardo has defied Eusebio to single combat on account of his persevering pursuit of his sister Julia. To show his adversary that he is not worthy of contempt, Eusebio gives a brief history of himself. His infant cries were first heard at the foot of a stone cross, where he was found lying abandoned, with the figure of a cross mysteriously, and indelibly, imprinted on his breast. The owner of the village near which he was found adopted him, and left him his name and riches. The Cross has since shielded him from innumerable perils; its sign

having guarded him from fire and sword, and preserved him from bandits, in shipwreck and from lightning. Thus distinguished by heaven, Eusebio bitterly resents Lisardo's insults, and ends his speech by an unmeasured defiance. The conflict which follows it is short. Lisardo falls, and entreats his adversary not to let him die unconfessed. Eusebio, conjured by the Cross on which Christ suffered, sheathes his weapon and carries the dying man to a neighbouring hermitage; receiving in return Lisardo's promise to pray for him so soon as he shall be admitted to heaven, that he too, when his time comes, may not have to depart unshriven.

Then the scene changes to the house of Curcio, Julia's father. Eusebio enters, and has the audacity to try to persuade Julia to flee with him, before she can hear that her brother has met with his death at his hands. The principal argument by which he urges her to take this step is, that it will be too late to-morrow, as her father intends then to force her to take the veil. Julia is about to consent to flight when that father's step is heard outside. Eusebio hastily conceals himself; and Curcio enters with unctuous congratulations to his daughter on the holy state which she is to embrace next morning at his bidding,—speeches worthy of Gertrude's father in the 'Promessi Sposi.' All, he tells her, has been arranged for her reception into the convent. The poor girl declines to be thus disposed of without her own consent. "My will should be your law, whether for right or for wrong," says the unreasonable Curcio. "Let me have a little time to consider," pleads Julia, "before determining my condition for life." "I have considered for you," replies her father, "and given the assent in your name;" and,

seeing her still resisting, he bids her not provoke him to slay her, and adds, "My old suspicions of thy mother must be true. I thought that I accused her falsely whom all our town took for a saint, and I felt remorse. But I seem to have been right after all." He goes on to tell his daughter with some prolixity how, shortly before her birth, maddened by his unreasonable suspicions, he led his wife, Rosmira, from the town to a lonely spot among the mountains. There . . . But at this point his narrative is interrupted by Julia's maid, who comes, pale and tearful, to announce the death of her young master; and to the horror of the father and the sister,—to the perhaps even greater terror of the concealed Eusebio,—Lisardo's body is carried in by the peasants who witnessed his death, and who declare the name of his slayer. Curcio turns to his unhappy daughter with these cruel words:—

"Excuse him, prithee, thou his would-be wife;
Say the chaste eagerness with which he wooed
Caused the slight error that produced this strife.
He wanted ink,—and so he wrote in blood!

JULIA.

Sir!

CURCIO.

Answer me no more. For thy new life
Prepare this very day with altered mood;
Or else prepare thy beauty for its doom,
To share my poor Lisardo's early tomb."—(M.)

Having said this, he leaves her alone (as he thinks) with her brother's corpse.

Then begins a terrible scene. The wretched Julia,

standing between the body of her dead brother and his living murderer, feels that the blood she sees flowing has placed an impassable barrier between herself and the man whom she still cannot help loving. She cries wildly, "Regardless of all other considerations but love, I was about to give thee my hand, and thou offerest to clasp it with one dyed in my brother's blood!" Eusebio bids Julia kill him to avenge her brother; and threatens to stay there and surrender himself to her angry father. "Grant me the last request I shall ever make to thee," is her reply. He promises that he will; and she bids him save his own life. "I had better lose it now," is his moody answer; "since, if I live, no convent walls will be high enough to preserve thee from me." "I shall know how to defend myself," rejoins Julia, "only do thou keep safe." "May I not see thee once more?" asks the unhappy lover. "Never," is the reply. "Dost thou hate me, then?" "I must strive to do so." "Wilt thou forget me?" "I know not if I can." Encouraged by this reply, Eusebio repeats his former question.

"Shall I see thee once more?

JULIA.

Never.

EUSEBIO.

What then of our fond love past?

JULIA.

What then of this red blood present?"—(M.)

A sound is heard: men are coming to remove Lisardo's body. Eusebio at last consents to depart, and the scene closes, and with it the first Act.

When the second Act begins, we find Eusebio the captain of a troop of banditti. Men would not believe that he slew Lisardo in fair combat. His property has been confiscated, and he himself pursued as a murderer. He has therefore given himself over to a wholly lawless life, robbing and murdering in all directions; but is still in his own way devout, as he shows by carefully putting a cross on the grave of each of his victims. To the number of these he comes very near to adding the pious Alberto, Bishop of Trent,[1] shot at by him on his way to Rome. The bullet is, however, found flattened against a book carried by the venerable traveller on his breast; and its bearer and author is, though alarmed, uninjured. Eusebio asks the subject of it, learns that it is "The Miracles of the Cross," sets Alberto free, and asks him in return to pray that he may not die unconfessed. This the old man readily engages to do; and, disclosing his name, pledges his word to his preserver that he will come and confess him whenever he shall summon him to do so.

Eusebio's next exploit is an attempt to carry Julia off from her convent. This attempt horrifies the audience; for they, meantime, have heard the end of Curcio's story. He narrates it in the wild mountain gorge in which he is seeking his son's murderer, at the foot of the very cross where his wife nearly fell a victim to his unjust suspicions;—where he left her for dead, and whence she returned (miraculously preserved alive) with a lovely new-born girl in her arms, with a red cross printed on its bosom,—its twin brother being lost, and all after-

[1] Although the strong local colouring of the piece is entirely Spanish, the scene of the "Devotion of the Cross" is laid in Italy, in the neighbourhood of Siena.

search for him having been in vain. Thus the spectators view Eusebio's foot on the brink of a frightful abyss; since the slain Lisardo is manifestly his brother,—the nun whom he designs to tear from her cloister evidently his own sister. With fear they see him inside her cell, and hearken to her consent to break her solemn vows and fly with him,—when lo! an unseen hand holds back the youth from falling into the awful gulf which is yawning to devour him; a glimpse of the cross on the maiden's breast changes Eusebio's mind, and he flees as from a devouring fire, saying, "I adore thee more than ever, but I cannot dishonour the Cross." The same reverence makes him entreat Julia to return to her convent; when, irresistibly impelled to her destruction, she rushes to seek him out in his mountain-haunts. It is at this point of the robber's course that Curcio and his avenging band come up with him. Mortally wounded by other hands in a desperate encounter (in which a secret prompting has led the unknown son to spare his father, and that father to wish rather to take prisoner, than to slay, his youthful adversary), Eusebio staggers to the foot of the self-same cross which witnessed his birth, and which now calls him to the exercise of contrite faith. He knows, he says, that from men he can expect no mercy—

> "But this cross, athwart my way,
> Rising up in silence, saith,—
> They, indeed, can give thee death,
> I, the life that lasts alway.—(M.)
> Tree which heaven has willed to dower
> With that true fruit whence we live,
> As that other death did give;

Of new Eden loveliest flower;
Bow of light, that in worst hour
Of the worst flood signal true,
O'er the world of mercy threw;
Fair plant yielding sweetest wine;
Of our David harp divine;
Of our Moses tables new;
Sinner am I, therefore I
Claim upon thy mercies make,
Since alone for sinners' sake
God on thee endured to die;
And for me would God have died
Had there been no world beside.—(D.)

. . . . .

I first robber shall not be,
Who on thee confessed to God;
Since we two the same path trod,
And repent—deny not me,
The redemption wrought on thee."—(M.)

Death is coming on apace when Curcio draws near, offers to stanch the wound, and, laying bare the print on Eusebio's breast, recognises in him his long-lost son, and exclaims—

"In the place where I stand o'er thee,
Where I sinned 'gainst her who bore thee,
Smites me God's just hand severe."—(M.)

Very touching is the dying youth's reply:—

EUSEBIO.

"I can speak no more; adieu,
O my father! for on me
Falls the fatal veil, and death,
In its swift flight passing by me,
Life to know thee doth deny me;
Time to live thy rule beneath,
And to answer thee e'en breath."—(M.)

Even as he says, so it is. After crying once and again on Alberto to come and hear his last confession, and receiving no response, Eusebio expires. Curcio rends his grey hair in bitter anguish, but he cannot stay to weep over the dead body. He is summoned to repel a fresh attack of the bandits, who advance under a new leader,—no other than Julia in man's apparel,—when lo! a miracle. Alberto, returning from Rome, is advancing up the rugged road, when a feeble voice calls him by name. It is the cry of Eusebio; reanimated to give him time for his last shrift. The pious bishop adores this signal token of the divine mercy; and shows no fear as the dead man rises from his lonely couch and pours into his ears the recital of his fearful crimes. But he offers on his behalf to heaven all his own penances, and is seen afar by the amazed bandits and their assailants (on whom the strange sight imposes a truce) with uplifted hand giving absolution to Eusebio; who has no sooner received it than he falls once more on the ground dead. "Such is the power of devotion to the Cross," says the pious elder to Curcio; who proclaims his son happy in his death, only wishing that his daughter might, in like manner be brought to repentance. "She is here," exclaims Julia, distracted by her discovery of her relationship to Eusebio; and horror-stricken at the remembrance of the crimes committed by her to accomplish the union which heaven so mercifully prevented. Curcio draws his sword that he may cleanse the honour of his house in his daughter's blood. But the cross, which Julia now clasps, saves her as it had saved Eusebio. Her solemn vow of penitence is heard; and it rises with her into the air, doubtless to restore her to her forsaken convent cell.

This striking play, which may here and there remind us of Schiller's "Robbers" (to which, however, it is immeasurably superior), was, like it, a youthful production. As such, it need not surprise us to find it, in parts, immature. Its notes of time are somewhat confused; and the wickedness of its leading characters is increased beyond necessity, and, in Julia's case, beyond all probability—unless, indeed, we may dismiss the ghastly catalogue of her murders as the fabrication of her own overwrought brain. But, whatever its faults, "The Devotion of the Cross" must be classed among the greatest fate-dramas of modern times. Eusebio is born, like Œdipus, under a curse; but from the worst doom of the wretched Theban king the cross which guarded him in infancy saves him in manhood. He does not slay his father; his unknown sister remains sacred to him.[1] The shadow of the great Christian symbol of reconciliation finally avails in his case to cut off "the descending and entailed curse," which is the consequence of his father's crime. But the doom which, in this life, overtakes him, is even yet a heavy one; and when the guilty Curcio, standing on the scene of his own early crime, discovers a son in the dying robber, "the wheel has come full circle," and a recognition, awful as those which thrill the spectators of Greek tragedy,

1 M. Philarète Chasle says, very justly: "On devine sans peine que Julie est la sœur d'Eusèbe; et cette invention dramatique augmentant d'intensité irait coudoyer l'horrible et l'insoutenable, si Calderon n'était doué de ce vrai génie dont l'essence est pure. Nous allons le voir, dans une occasion si difficile, retrouver la moralité qui lui est propre, la sublime pudeur qui ne l'abandonne jamais. Ses ailes blanches et vierges trempent dans l'orage sans se flétrir, et effleurent la foudre sans se brûler."

moves the beholder alike with terror and with pity. Then, last of all, comes the wonderful after-climax; when, athwart the blackness of the ravine, with its high-piled rocks and gloomy pines, dark and weird as a landscape by Salvator Rosa, there darts a sudden ray of light as from a setting sun, lighting up, with an unexpected glory, the cross which guards and consecrates the valley, and stands a sentinel over the shrift of the dead.

"The Purgatory of St Patrick" is another of Calderon's striking religious plays. In its first two Acts is represented the conversion of Ireland; in its last that of a notorious sinner. The former is effected by St Patrick's preaching; the latter by his prayers after he has departed this life. Montalvan had told the story; and had antedated the adventures of a "miles quidam Oënus nomine qui multis annis sub rege Stephano militaverat," according to Matthew Paris, in order to bring the eye-witness of "St Patrick's Purgatory" into the same canvas as that on which he had depicted its first discovery. Calderon dramatised the legend, and found for his play a true centre of unity in the great personality of the Irish apostle. He and Enius are wrecked together on the island—received the one with contempt, the other with honour, by its savage monarch; and, three years later, incur each his fiercest displeasure: the wicked Enius by eloping with, and murdering, the king's daughter, Polonia; the holy Patrick, by converting his subjects to the faith of Christ. Even the miraculous restoration to life of the slain Polonia, by the prayers of the saint, has but a slight effect on her obdurate father. He insists on seeing either heaven, hell, or at least purgatory, with his own eyes, if he is to believe in the existence of any of

them. The saint, threatened by him with death unless this unreasonable demand is complied with, prays fervently, and gets, in answer to his request, a door opened into the nether world. A dark cave by a neighbouring lake is made, from henceforth, the portal which whosoever enters in a state of grace shall see untold wonders; while it shall consign the impenitent sinner who ventures within to sudden destruction. Polonia (seeking a hermitage in which befittingly to spend her restored life) is startled by the awful sounds which strike her ear at its entrance; and points it out to the rest in words whose graphic force have supplied Shelley with a fine image in his "Cenci:"—

> "See ye not here this rock some power secureth,
> That grasps with awful toil the hillside brown,
> And, with the very anguish it endureth
> Age after age, seems slowly coming down?
> Suspended there with effort, it obscureth
> A mighty cave beneath, which it doth crown;—
> An open mouth the horrid cavern shapes,
> Wherewith the melancholy mountain gapes."—(M.)

Into this cavern, despite of Patrick's warnings, the unbelieving king rushes,—to perish in its awful recesses. Into this same cavern goes Enius, penitent at last for all his fearful crimes;—but this takes place some years later. There is a considerable interval of time between the second and third Acts, and the latter begins with the conversion of Enius. He has returned to Ireland to slay an enemy of his there; and night after night has found his way barred by a mysterious figure muffled in a cloak. He prepares to fight with him rather than have his purpose any longer baffled. But, while he does so,

a chill runs through his veins; and when the unknown form stands once more beside him, calls him by his name, and, heedless of his challenge, abides his stroke, Enius sees with horror that his sword merely cuts the air, and requires all his long-practised courage to enable him to follow the mysterious stranger. But he does follow him, nevertheless, and comes up with him in a lonely street; where, getting no answer to his demand of the unknown person's name, he flings himself upon him and tears off by force the cloak that shrouds him. It discloses to him a skeleton. "I, alas! am Enius," says the awful spectre. "How is it that thou dost not know thine own self?"

Sobered by this dread revelation of his own future state, Enius flees to seek Patrick (who once saved his life, and whom he then promised to meet once more) in the depths of the mysterious cavern; at the end of which lies Paradise, now the saint's joyful abode. On his way he encounters the hermit princess, Polonia,—the ghost (so it seems to his aroused conscience) of his worst crime, risen up to bar the way to mercy. Her introduction, as she rises in the holy calm of her morning orisons before the sin-stricken Enius, affects the spectator's mind with a soothing influence. He has climbed with Enius up from the abyss of crime, like Dante from that of hell; before the one, as the other, glow the purgatorial fires.[1] The green mount with its overshadowing trees, on which kneels the royal lady beside her quiet lake, refreshes his soul somewhat as did the sapphire sea, and flower-enamelled turf at the foot of the purgatorial mountain, the eyes of Dante.

[1] The tale of Oënus is one out of many of the mediæval precursors of the Divine Comedy.

POLONIA.

"To Thee, O Lord, my spirit climbs,
To Thee from every lonely hill
I burn to sacrifice my will
A thousand and a thousand times.
And, such my boundless love to Thee,
I wish each will of mine a living soul could be.
. . . . . .
Far better on some natural lawn
To see the morn its gems bestrew,
Or watch it weeping pearls of dew
Within the white arms of the dawn;
Or view, before the sun the stars
Drive o'er the brightening plain their swiftly-fading cars,

Far better in the mighty main,
As night comes on and clouds grow grey,
To see the golden coach of day
Drive down amid the waves of Spain
(But, be it dark or be it bright,
O Lord! I praise Thy name by day and night),

Than to endure the inner strife,
The specious glare, but real weight,
Of pomp and power, and pride and state,
And all the vanities of life."—(M.)

Enius asks the way to the cavern: Polonia knows him again, but subdues all thoughts of revenge, and gives him the direction he needs. The penitent prays to be preserved from despair at the sight of his greatest sin; and is comforted, as he enters the bark which is to bear him across the lake, by the assurance that his victim yet lives, and that she pardons him.

The closing scene exhibits Polonia, her sister the Queen of Ireland, and their attendants, awaiting, with

the recluse guardians of the cave, the reappearance of Enius. The door is thrown open; the question is, Will the soldier emerge from it to the light of day, or prove to have perished like so many of his precursors? After a brief interval he sets the doubt at rest, and comes forth, pale but collected, to disclose, at the Prior's command, the secrets of the everlasting prison-house. His is a tale awful like that which Socrates says he heard from the lips of Er the son of Armenius. On his first entrance he heard a sound as of thunder, and seemed to sink into the very centre of the earth. There he passed through a jasper hall, where twelve white-robed elders admonished him to give no credence to the fiends that would shortly beset him; and straightway afterwards he found himself among the demon crew. These told him that his salvation was impossible, and bade him, with seeming kindness, not seek to be tormented before his time, but return to enjoy earthly pleasure while he could. Knowing well that to do so would insure his ruin, he refused with firmness. The devils thereupon seized him and carried him from torment to torment. Plunged into flames, whirled through regions of eternal ice, set amid fiery vipers and torrents of burning pitch, and cast into a volcano whose sparks were tortured spirits, the courage of Enius failed not: each time he called on the name of Christ, and each time he was released. Then came the last trial. And here the narrative, hitherto true to those of Dante's Scandinavian and Teutonic precursors, appears to desert them for Eastern legend. For Enius says that, at length, he stood before a fiery river, which could only be crossed by a bridge one single line in width. The wretches

who fell from it were rent and devoured by hydras and monsters in the sulphurous stream below. Once more the shuddering Enius called aloud on Christ. Once more strength was given him, and he passed the perilous bridge in safety. And now his dangers were over. Noble trees of Paradise waved their scented boughs above his head, fair flowers fed by innumerable fountains blossomed beneath his feet; while amid the branches the birds sang sweetly. As he advanced along the woodland glades, he saw, beauteous and stately, the golden city gleaming, with its jewelled gateways, out of which poured forth saints in long procession to greet the new citizen. Last of all, and of all most resplendent, stepped forward, amid choirs of angels, "the great patriarch, Patrick," to congratulate his old acquaintance on having at length kept tryst with him; and to dismiss him back to earth (for the present) with a friendly embrace,—since he, too, must die ere he can enter the city of the saints.

CHAPTER VI.

HIS SACRED DRAMAS.—THE MARTYR PLAYS.

NOWHERE is Calderon more successful than in the mine (left unwrought by so many dramatists) of Christian martyrology. The most celebrated of his plays so originated is "The Wonder-working Magician,"—a play from which Goethe derived several hints for his "Faust." Its scene is laid at Antioch; in the pleasant groves near which famous city the studious pagan philosopher, Cyprian, is discovered poring over Pliny's definition of the divine nature. To him enters the demon, disguised as a travelling student; with the malicious intention of hindering his researches after truth. "What sciences do you know?" asks Cyprian. "Many," is the answer.

CYPRIAN.

"Alas!
Much pains must we expend on one alone,
And even then attain it not.
. . . . . .

DEMON.

. . . In the country whence I come, sciences
Require no learning, they are known.

CYPRIAN.

Oh, would
I were of that bright country, for in this
The more we study, we the more discover
Our ignorance.

DEMON.

It is so true, that I
Had so much arrogance as to oppose
The chair of the most high professorship,
And obtained many votes, and though I lost,
The attempt was still more glorious than the failure
Could be dishonourable."—(S.)

Notwithstanding these boasts, the demon has to own himself worsted in the disputation which follows, Cyprian's demonstration of the unity of the Godhead being too clear for him to impugn; and he departs to seek a different weapon against him in the singular beauty of Justina, a Christian maiden in Antioch. Her charms are first brought before Cyprian by a proposed duel for them between Lelius (son of the Governor of Antioch) and his friend Florus, which he prevents; and, having persuaded the rivals to refer their dispute to the lady herself by each asking her in marriage of her father, visits her to lay their claims before her, and falls in love with her himself. Justina rejects all three, and is, in her turn, renounced by both her former lovers, who are made, by a wicked stratagem of the demon, each to think himself despised for a rival's sake.

The second Act shows us Cyprian maddened by his desperate passion. Vainly has he flung aside the sober garb of a philosopher to clothe himself in a courtier dress. Vainly has he pressed his suit on Justina. Her words—

"Fate forbids that I should love thee,
Cyprian, except in death"—(M.)

drive him forth from the city, and we overhear him bemoaning himself by the sad sea waves thus:—

"O memory! permit it not
That the tyrant of my thought
Be another soul, that still
Holds dominion o'er the will;
That would refuse (but can no more)
To bend, to tremble, and adore.
Vain idolatry!—I saw,
And gazing, became blind with error,
Weak ambition, which the awe
Of her presence bound to terror!
So beautiful she was, and I,
Between my love and jealousy,
And so convulsed with hope and fear,
Unworthy as it may appear,
So bitter is the life I live,
That, hear me hell, I now would give
To thy most detested spirit
My soul, for ever to inherit—
To suffer punishment, and pine,
So this woman may be mine.
Hear'st thou, hell! dost thou reject it?
My soul is offered!

DEMON (*unseen*).

I accept it.
(*Tempest with thunder and lightning.*)

CYPRIAN.

What is this? Ye heavens, for ever pure,
At once intensely radiant and obscure!
Athwart the ethereal halls
The lightnings' arrow and the thunder-balls

The days affright,
As from the horizon round,
Burst with earthquake sound,
In mighty torrents the electric fountains:
Clouds quench the sun, and thunder-smoke
Strangles the air, and fire eclipses heaven.
Philosophy, thou canst not even
Compel their causes underneath thy yoke.
From yonder clouds, even to the waves below,
The fragments of a single ruin choke
Imagination's flight;
For on flakes of surge, like feathers light,
The ashes of the desolation cast
Upon the gloomy blast,
Tell of the footsteps of the storm;
And nearer, see the melancholy form
Of a great ship, the outcast of the sea,
Drives miserably."—(S.)

From this seeming ship, cast away in Cyprian's sight, the demon floats to land on a plank. Hospitably received, the wrecked voyager unfolds a marvellous tale of his own former greatness and fallen fortunes:—

"In myself I am
A world of happiness and misery.
This I have lost, and that I must lament
For ever. In my attributes I stood
So high and so heroically great,
In lineage so supreme, and with a genius
Which penetrated with a glance the world
Beneath my feet, that, won by my high merit,
A king, whom I may call the King of kings,
. . . . . .
In his high palace, roofed with brightest gems
Of living light—call them the stars of heaven—
Named me his counsellor. But the high praise

Stung me with pride and envy, and I rose
In mighty competition to ascend
His seat, and place my foot triumphantly
Upon his subject thrones. Chastised, I know
The depth to which ambition falls."—(S.)

But still he is mighty enough, he says, to give effect to Cyprian's wildest wishes. The bait is taken. Cyprian discloses to him, after a while, his love for Justina. The demon laughs incredulously when he hears that a woman is the cause of such deep dejection. "Let me describe her to you," says Cyprian:—

"The fair cradle of the skies,
Where the infant sun reposes
Ere he rises, decked with roses
Robed in snow, to dry heaven's eyes;
The green prison-bud that tries
To restrain the conscious rose,
When the crimson captive knows
April treads its garden near,
Turning dawn's half-frozen tear
To a smile where sunshine glows;
The sweet streamlet gliding by,
Though it scarcely dares to breathe
Softest murmurs through its teeth,
From the frosts that on it lie;
The bright pink, in its small sky
Shining like a coral star;
The blithe bird that flies afar,
Dressed in shifting shades and blooms,—
Soaring citherne of gay plumes,
Harping high o'er heaven's blue bar;
The white rock that cheats the sun
When it tries to melt it down,
For it can but melt the crown
Which from winter's snow it won;

The green bay that will not shun,
Though the heavens are all aglow,
For its feet a bath of snow,—
Green Narcissus of the brook,
Fearless leaning o'er to look,
Though the stream runs chill below:
In a word, the crimson dawn,
Sun, mead, streamlet, rosebud, May,
Bird that sings his amorous lay,
April's laugh that gems the lawn,
Pink that sips the dews up-drawn,
Rock that stands in storm and shine,
Bay-tree that delights to twine
Round its fadeless leaves the sun,
All are parts which, met in one,
Form this woman most divine."—(M.)

To win her, he says he would give his soul. Cyprian learns that a year's study of magic arts will be needed before he can have sufficient skill in them to make her his own. Infatuated by love, he signs the fatal bond with his blood which makes his soul over to his teacher, and departs with him to receive the requisite instruction in a lonely cavern.

When the year has expired, Cyprian comes forth an adept in the unholy arts which he has been studying, with spells that can raise ghosts; but which, as he is to learn presently, cannot force (however powerfully they may incline) human free-will. He begins to use them in order to draw Justina to his side—the Demon powerfully seconding them.

DEMON.

"Abyss of Hell! I call on thee,
Thou wild misrule of thine own anarchy!
From thy prison-house set free

The spirits of voluptuous death,
That with their mighty breath
They may destroy a world of virgin thoughts;
Let her chaste mind with fancies thick as motes
Be peopled from the shadowy deep,
Till her guileless phantasy
Full to overflowing be!
And with sweetest harmony,
Let birds, and flowers, and leaves, and all things move
To love—only to love.
Let nothing meet her eyes
But signs of Love's soft victories;
Let nothing meet her ears
But sounds of Love's sweet sorrow;
So that from faith no succour may she borrow,
But, guided by my spirit blind,
And in a magic snare entwined,
She may now seek Cyprian.
Begin, while I in silence bind
My voice when thy sweet song thou hast begun.

A VOICE *within.*

What is the glory far above
All else in human life?

ALL.

Love! Love!

(*The* DEMON *goes out. Enter* JUSTINA.)

FIRST VOICE.

There is no form on which the fire
Of love its traces has impressed not.
Man lives far more in love's desire
Than by life's breath, soon possessed not.
If all that lives must love or die,
All shapes on earth, or sea, or sky,
With one consent to heaven cry
That the glory far above
All else in life is——

ALL.

Love! O love!

JUSTINA (*alarmed and disturbed*).

Thou melancholy thought, which art
So fluttering and so sweet, to thee
When did I give the liberty
Thus to afflict my heart?
What is the cause of this new power,
Which doth my fevered being move,
Momently raging more and more?
What subtle pain is kindled now
Which from my heart doth overflow
Into my senses?—

ALL.

Love! O love!

JUSTINA (*more composed*).

'Tis that enamoured nightingale
Who gives me the reply;
He ever tells the same soft tale
Of passion and of constancy
To his mate, who, rapt and fond,
Listening sits a bough beyond.

Be silent, nightingale!—No more
Make me think, in hearing thee
Thus tenderly thy love deplore,
If a bird can feel his so,
What a man would feel for me.
And, voluptuous vine, O thou
Who seekest most when least pursuing,
Who the trunk thou interlacest
Deck'st with verdure, yet embracest
With a weight which is its ruin,—
No more, with green embraces, vine,

Make me think on what thou lovest,—
For, whilst thus thy boughs entwine,
I fear lest thou shouldst teach me, sophist,
How arms might be entangled too.

Light-enchanted sunflower, thou
Who gazest ever true and tender
On the sun's revolving splendour,
Follow not his faithless glance
With thy faded countenance;
Nor teach my beating heart to fear,
If leaves can mourn without a tear,
How eyes must weep! O nightingale,
Cease from thy enamoured tale,—
Leafy vine, unwreath thy bower,
Restless sunflower, cease to move,—
Or tell me all what poisonous power
Ye use against me?

ALL.

Love! love! love!

JUSTINA.

It cannot be! Whom have I ever loved?
Trophies of my oblivion and disdain,
Florus and Lelius did I not reject?
And Cyprian?——

(*She becomes troubled at his name.*)

. . . . . .

Enter DEMON (*who says*)—

Follow, and I will lead thee where he is.

JUSTINA.

And who art thou, who hast found entrance hither
Into my chamber, through the doors and locks?
Art thou a monstrous shadow which my madness
Has formed in the idle air?

DEMON.

No; I am one
Called by the thought which tyrannises thee
From his eternal dwelling; who this day
Is pledged to bear thee unto Cyprian.

JUSTINA.

So shall thy promise fail. This agony
Of passion which afflicts my heart and soul
May sweep imagination in its storm;
The will is firm. . . .
. . . . . .
Thought is not in my power, but action is.
I will not move my foot to follow thee.
. . . . . .

DEMON.

. I
Must force thy will.

JUSTINA.

It is invincible;
It were not free if thou hadst power upon it.
(*He draws, but cannot move her.*)
. . . . . .
. . . . My defence
Consists in God.

DEMON.

Woman, thou hast subdued me
Only by not owning thyself subdued.
But since thou thus findest defence in God,
I will assume a feigned form, and thus
Make thee a victim of my baffled rage.
For I will mask a spirit in thy form
Who will betray thy name to infamy."—(S.)

The Demon carries out this plan; and a phantom-figure of Justina appears at last, in answer to Cyprian's

repeated incantations. But a stronger Hand interposes to defend Justina's fair fame, and to save Cyprian's soul. As in the "Purgatory of St Patrick," the cloak which shrouds the apparition reveals a hideous skeleton. "Such, Cyprian, are all the glories of this world," says the phantom, and vanishes from his sight. The Demon offers Cyprian other means for attaining his end. "I do not ask them," is the answer; "I only want to have the bond, which I gave you, returned me, since you have not performed your contract." The Demon argues that he made good his promise: only a portent defeated its fulfilment. "Worked by whom?" asks Cyprian; and, turning his master's teaching against himself, he constrains him by his magic science to give a true answer. Step by step he wrings from him the admission that a god guards Justina; and that God, Almighty, Omniscient, All-Holy,—the God of the Christians. "But thou," concludes the Evil One, "wilt now invoke Him in vain. I hold thy bond signed with thine own blood. Know me at length: I am the Devil, and thou art my slave for ever." Hoping against hope that He who rescued the guiltless Justina may likewise deliver him, on his repentance, guilty though he be, Cyprian calls on God, tears himself from the Demon's grasp, and departs to seek baptism—fortified by which holy sacrament he boldly presents himself before the Governor of Antioch, avows himself a Christian and a candidate for martyrdom, and then falls senseless on the ground. At this moment another prisoner is brought in. It is Justina, found praying in a Christian Church, and obnoxious to the Governor as the object of his son Lelius's passion, which had led the youth into danger and imprisonment. The

Governor leaves his two captives alone for a few moments while he considers their sentence. They may yet save their lives by a recantation; as, should Cyprian then espouse Justina and go with her into banishment, the father's fears for Lelius might cease.

Recovering from his swoon, Cyprian exclaims to Justina, who seems to him a second phantom come to trouble his new resolve: "I invoked thee not; why here?" The maiden explains to him that she is a prisoner for confessing Christ. "He has watched well in thy defence," says Cyprian; "get Him to listen to my prayers. . . . But can He; for I sold my soul to the Demon for thy beauty?"

"JUSTINA.

Oh, there are not
Stars as many in the heavens,[1]
Sands as many on the shore,
Sparks within the fire as many,
Motes as many in the beam,
On the winds so many feathers,
As the sins He can forgive.

CYPRIAN.

I believe it, and am ready
Now a thousand lives to give Him,
. . . . .

A SERVANT (*entering*).

The Lord Governor, Aurelius,
Summons Cyprian to his presence,
And Justina. . . . .
. . . . .

[1] Assonants in *e, e.*

JUSTINA (*to* CYPRIAN).

I once said that I could love thee
But in death, and since together,
Cyprian, we now must die,
What I promised I present thee." (*Exeunt.*)
—(M.)

While the two martyrs are being beheaded a sound as of a great tempest is heard; and then the scene opens to disclose their bodies lying together on a scaffold, while the Demon (sorely against his will) appears to testify to Justina's perfect innocence, and to own that he has no power now to keep Cyprian back from heaven; since his signature to the fatal bond has been washed off by his blood.

A good French critic (M. de Latour) has observed on this Faust Christianised that, whereas Goethe's masterpiece leaves for its final effect a sense of bitterness and desolation in the soul, the very martyrdom of Cyprian and of Justina leaves us for a legacy something of their sweet and serene tranquillity. The Christian virgin's resistance of the powerful spells of love is a scene of unrivalled beauty, which derives fresh interest from Justina's veiled affection for Cyprian—so carefully hidden even from herself, that it is never owned till the hour when she can, without blame,

"The thing denied to Life, on Death bestow."

And the Evil One seems in his dialogue with Cyprian, by his concealed anguish, by his backward glances to that high estate whence he fell, "not less than archangel ruined"—however much the deterioration wrought by that fall on his mighty intellect may appear in its fruitless devices and its short-sighted wisdom.

These are yet more apparent in another of Calderon's martyr-plays, "The Joseph of Women;" which, although not to be ranked, as "The Wonder-working Magician" has been by some editors, among the philosophic dramas at the head of which stands Goethe's "Faust," yet possesses remarkable beauties. Its heroine is Eugenia, the wise and beautiful daughter of the Governor of Alexandria—in which city, while yet a worshipper of idols, she reads lectures like another Hypatia, and collects around her a polite and learned society who engage in poetic and witty contests. The charms of a rival fair one, Melancia, are cast into the shade by Eugenia's; and Cesarinus, son of the Emperor of Rome himself, is at her feet. A duel, fought by him with Aurelius, another of Eugenia's suitors, has strange results. Into the dead body of the latter, who is slain by Cesarinus, the Demon, who prowls round Eugenia to hinder her conversion, enters; and, when she flees to the Thebaïd desert to seek the instruction of the hermit Helenus, the false Aurelius pursues her there. By a master-stroke of policy, he persuades her father and her lover, who have come to look for her, that the gods have snatched Eugenia from the earth and given her a throne on Olympus. And then, in execution of a commission intrusted to him against the Christians, he captures Eugenia, in the monk's dress, which she, Marina-like, has assumed, along with the aged Helenus; and has the pleasure of presenting her as a slave to her rival Melancia at the very moment when Alexandria is ringing with the name, and rejoicing at the dedication of the statue, of the new goddess Eugenia. Not a word escapes the Christian maiden's lips which could disclose either her sex or her name.

She suffers on in silence; even the hateful love which the lawless Melancia proffers to the handsome youth which Eugenia seems, wrings not from her her secret, and is only met by the indignant refusal of a second Joseph. Like the false Egyptian woman of Genesis, Melancia resolves to prevent her slave's accusation by a counter-charge: she, too, holds this second Joseph's garment, and rushes with it, tearful and dishevelled, before the tribunal of the Governor. Eugenia's father, Philip, is occupying it that morning for the last time. Cesarinus has received the mandate to supersede him; and has made his first use of his new authority by paying fresh honours to the memory of his ever-beloved Eugenia. He has placed her statue above the judgment-seat, before which she is now dragged in the mean garments of a slave to answer her false accuser. This very morning Cesarinus is engaged in dedicating a temple which he has raised to Eugenia; and, mingled with the dreadful accents of the hateful charge against her, the young Christian's ears are saluted by sounds to her yet more dreadful—those of the impious hymns which exalt her name to the dishonour of the true God, and proclaim with blasphemous accents "the triumph of the goddess Eugenia."

Distracted by the thought of being even the innocent occasion of such wickedness, anxious to offer all the reparation in her power to the offended majesty of heaven, Eugenia resolves to die. The father, whom she recognises so easily, but to whose eye she is a total stranger, asks her for her defence, and she makes none. The fiery death, to which her silence must consign her, has no terrors for her constant soul. Willingly, and mutely, Eugenia receives sentence of death from her own father's

lips, beneath the image raised to her honour. The Demon (wiser than herself in this) rejoices to see her about to miss the crown of martyrdom, and to err by permitting herself to die for a falsehood. But the new Marina is not suffered to persevere in her heroic mistake. "Stay," says the aged Helenus, "and disclose the truth." Eugenia obeys the voice of her adopted father, and reveals her sex; adding that Melancia, having accused her of a crime of which she could not possibly have been guilty, will suffer the penalty which she sought to inflict, and be consumed with fire of heaven. This shortly comes to pass; but not till Eugenia has first undeceived her idolatrous worshippers by declaring who she really is.

The scene is a striking one. The Governor starts with horror as he sees his own child in the bondman whom he had doomed to the flames; Cesarinus and the people look amazed from the statue to the meanly dressed form below it, in whose shape and features they see suddenly revealed to them its beauteous original. The guilty Melancia cowers on one side, as though she would hide from her swift-coming judgment; while, with flashing eye and kindling cheek, Eugenia occupies the centre of the scene, and uses all the might of her proved innocence, and regained fairness, to draw the admiring populace from idols to the worship of the true God, as she exclaims[1]—

> "Of that image ye revere here
> I am the original.
> I Eugenia am. What fear ye?
> What amazes, what alarms you?

[1] Assonants in *e*, *e*.

What perturbs, what checks all speech here?
What indeed but the discovery
Of your blindness, now ye see me
By this throne, which is an altar
And tribunal both together,
At the self-same time a criminal
And the goddess whom all reverence.
Here accused, there venerated,
Here abased, for worship set there,
Ye behold me in one instant.
How can these things fit together—
There to stand for adoration,
Here receive of death the sentence?
Thou behold whom thou dost worship (*To* PHILIP)
Yet condemn; thou see whom dearly (*To* CESARINUS)
Thou dost love, yet prosecute;
Thine accused, yet favoured, see here; (*To* MELANCIA)
. . . . . .
And let all,—all ye behold now
Her to whom your hymns ascended,
And for whom ye lit unknowing
Sacrificial fires, directed
There to give me grateful incense,
Here to burn my flesh intended."

The populace hearing this, and witnessing Melancia's punishment, which immediately follows, while a thunderbolt at the same time strikes the idol they had been worshipping, begin to proclaim aloud Eugenia's God; and her father and brother avow themselves converts to the faith. But Cesarinus, the new governor, is persuaded by the false Aurelius that all they have seen is but the work of magic; and he listens the more readily to the demon's counsel as he now sees his opportunity to gain the long-coveted hand of Eugenia. So he confronts the maiden, as, rejoicing in the victory she has

won for Christ, she stands reunited to her relatives and to her spiritual father, with the following dread alternative:—

"Alexandria's Prefect, I
Sit now in thy father's place;
Therefore must this day's disgrace
Fall on me with infamy,
Or be paid with usury;
Lest the highest gods look down
On me with an awful frown,
Seeing thee against them fight
With thy Christian magic's might
While I rule within this town.
All I can I do for thee;
Here I offer thee my hand
If thou wilt, as I command,
Thy Man-God renounce for me.
Both thy sire and brother see
Wrapt in guilt as thine the same,
Praising now with thee his name;
Take their part, then, noting this,
That so small the distance is
'Twixt this hand and death's stern claim,
That within thy choice now lie,
Here my hand, there punishment.

EUGENIA.

Then I speak our joint intent:
We have chosen.

CESARINUS.

What?

ALL THREE.

To die.

. . . . . .

CESARINUS.

Woman, who in case so fell
Dost thy courage high approve,
Set 'twixt death and my fond love
Choosing death,—bethink thee well
That to die is terrible.

EUGENIA.

I esteem myself thrice blest,
Of my long desire possessed.

CESARINUS.

Take her hence ; lest, gazing thus
On her face of perfect beauty,
Courage fail me for my duty.

EUGENIA.

Father ! brother ! Helenus !

THE THREE.

Speak.

EUGENIA.

Deny not ye the faith
When ye see me die.

HELENUS.

Instead,
We with thee our blood will shed."
(EUGENIA *is led to execution.*)

Cesarinus repents his rash order; and sends, an instant too late, to recall it. When he learns that the headsman's axe has already done its work, he turns furiously on Aurelius and charges him with having pushed him on to kill Eugenia out of jealousy. But his sword can but

slay the already slain. The Demon extricates himself from the lifeless form which he had so long animated, and stands confessed as the author of the persecution; while a celestial vision above reveals the martyr mounting upwards on her throne, and around her angels, singing—

"This Eugenia's triumph is,
That before hers could not be;
Since alone in heavenly bliss
Can the saints their triumph see."[1]

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[1] A third beautiful martyr-play, "The Two Lovers of Heaven," has been very well translated by Mr MacCarthy; who has pointed out, in a note to its first scene, a curious parallel between the perplexity of Goethe's Faust over the first chapter of St John's Gospel, and that of its hero, Chrysanthus, over the same texts.

CHAPTER VII.

DRAMA OF ROMANCE.—"LIFE IS A DREAM."

CALDERON has several plays with subjects borrowed from romances, or invented by himself in a similar style. He gives us in one the eager competition of Archombrotus and Poliarchus for the hand of the fair Argenis, Princess of Sicily, appeased by the discovery, by means of a jewel-token, that the first-named is brother to the lady whom he has been wooing; in another, the adventures of Count Lucanor with the Soldan of Egypt, from whom he redeems by a stratagem the captive Duke of Tuscany, and thus wins Rosamund, his daughter, for his wife. Or again, taking his subject from the better-known tales of knight-errantry, Calderon bids us wander in Boïardo's deceitful garden of Falerina, with Roland and with Oliver, or behold them fighting manfully with the great Moorish giant, Fierabras, for the possession of the bridge of Mantible; while his treacherous sister, the handsome Floripes, misled by her love for Guy of Burgundy, releases captive Paladins from her brother's dungeons, slays his giant warder, and boldly casts in her lot with Charlemagne and his peers.

In his eighty-first year Calderon finished a play

which told of the varied fortunes of Leonidas and Marphisa, the lost children of a king, discovered at the *dénouement* of the piece by the engraved plates of metal which each holds; and in earlier life he dramatised the kindred subject of that romance of Heliodorus which furnished Tasso with his story of Clorinda's birth,—under the name of "The Children of Fortune." At the close of this play the birth-token of Chariclea, the white daughter of the dusky Ethiopian queen, comes to light just in time to prevent her being sacrificed as a thank-offering for victory by the command of her own mother; and the medal with its head of fortune which Theagenes had bestowed on Chariclea at their troth-plight, does him a similar good office by restoring him to his aged father, the priest of the Delphic Apollo.

In "The Castle of Lindabridis" we are introduced to an airy fortress which flies about by art magic from place to place, carrying a fair claimant to the throne of Tartary in search of a knight brave enough to win its crown for her by overthrowing in single combat her brother and competitor; while in "Auristella and Lysidas," two Amazonian princesses march at the head of armies to rescue their captive brothers, and stand by to guard the lists in which Lysidas is bidden to fight with seven competitors; the promised reward of the victor being the privilege of wedding, and crowning Queen of Athens, one of the two fair sisters, Auristella and Clariana.

But amusing as are the stories of some of these plays, they are none of them sufficiently important to require a detailed notice in so small a work as the present one. It is otherwise with another drama, which rests on as unsubstantial a basis of fact as they do; but which

claims the reader's attention, alike by its celebrity, which is more European than that of Calderon's other works, and by the appeal which the treatment of its subject makes to the spectator's higher imagination.

"Life is a Dream," by its very title, suggests deeper thoughts than are generally roused by Calderon's secular dramas. It is classed by some editors with the "Wonder-working Magician;" and regarded by other critics as Calderon's single specimen of a philosophic play. Only a brief analysis of it will, however, be attempted here, the work having been already done so effectually, some years ago, by the present Archbishop of Dublin, that, for many readers, a short sketch will be quite sufficient.

Basilius, King of Poland, imprisons his son Sigismund from birth in a lonely tower—being moved to do this by his own astrologic science; which has forewarned him that this son is likely to be the ruin of all concerned with him, and one day to trample on his own father's head. The king has no other child, and is purposing to leave his kingdom to Astolpho and Estrella, his two sisters' only children; and, by wedding the two cousins, to conciliate their rival claims. There is an objection to this arrangement not known to Basilius, and carefully hidden by Astolpho. The young prince is already engaged in honour to Rosaura; a beautiful lady of mysterious parentage, who, abandoning her native Muscovy, pursues her recreant lover to Poland, in male attire, armed with the sword which was her birth-token.

The play arouses our curiosity for her fortunes and for those of Sigismund from the first, by making the fair stranger stumble, in its opening scene, on the Tower where the unhappy prince lies chained,—ferocious as a

caged tiger, yet capable of being softened by her bewitching vision. Clotaldo, the stern warder, who rushes in after a time to exact the penalty threatened on all who invade the king's secret, is softened by the sight of the sword; for he knows it for the one he gave in happier days to Violante, Rosaura's mother. Nor, as it happens, does Basilius feel enraged when Clotaldo discloses to him tremblingly that two foreigners have seen the jealously guarded prince. His readily accorded pardon enables Rosaura's father, without disclosing their true relationship even to herself, to place her, as his niece, in the service of her rival, the Princess Estrella. Now the king's leniency on this occasion sprang from a strange cause. He has formed the resolution, which he discloses to his two heirs-presumptive and to his nobles assembled in conclave, to give Sigismund one chance of vanquishing his cruel fate, by letting him assume his true rank for a single day, and seeing how he will comport himself under the trial. "Human freewill" (so he argues) "can conquer the most adverse influences of the stars. Let Sigismund show that he is worthy to reign, and I will not set aside his just claims on the succession. Should his bad conduct justify my fears, he must return to his dungeon." But to prepare for the latter much more probable alternative—for how should a man brutalised by years of cruel confinement become suddenly endowed with all kingly virtues?—and to break the almost inevitable fall, Basilius orders a strong sleeping-potion to be given to his son, aud has him transported in a deep slumber to his palace. There, like the awakened sleepers of the 'Arabian Nights,' and of the induction to the "Taming of the Shrew"—only not for a jest, as in their

case, but for a very serious purpose,—the amazed prince, opening his eyes in a soft and sumptuous bed, is made to find himself in a rich apartment, with obsequious servants attending on him, and courtiers advancing with their congratulations. As might have been expected, he cannot stand the sudden change well. He responds discourteously to his cousin Astolpho's greeting; he throws an officious servant, who warned him to maintain a greater reserve towards the lady Estrella, out of the window; and when that star is, as he says, eclipsed by a sun in the person of Rosaura, and his violent wooing of her is interrupted by Clotaldo, he all but kills his former tutor, and Astolpho in his defence; and tells his father, who reproves him for his disrespect to age, that he has a long account to settle with him for the sufferings he has endured at his hands.

Basilius acknowledges the failure of his experiment, and gives orders for a second stupefying potion. By its aid his son is transferred once more to his lonely tower; that, awaking in the same rude dress, bound by the same chain as when he fell asleep the first time, he may take all that has come and gone between for a strange dream. A sympathising bystander exclaims—

> "Never from that sleep profound
> Wake, O Sigismund, or rise,
> To behold with wondering eyes
> All thy glorious life o'erthrown,
> Like a shadow that hath flown,
> Like a bright brief flame that dies!"—(M.)

But awake he must. His father, disguised, stands in the background to observe without being seen. Clotaldo, Sigismund's governor, presents himself to him

alone, and pretends to wonder at his having indulged in so long a sleep. "If all I have seen in that sleep is indeed a dream," says the unhappy youth, "I may well be asleep still; for I see nothing now that looks more real than what I beheld then." "Tell me your dream," says Clotaldo. "If it was one," says Sigismund,—"still let me say, of the magnificence which surrounded me so palpably—I was for a while Prince of Poland." "I hope you rewarded me handsomely," says the tutor, as if in jest. "Nay," is the half-remorseful reply, "twice I was putting thee to a traitor's death, —I took vengeance on all men—one woman alone I loved. Surely there must have been truth in the vision; for, though all the splendours have vanished, that love remains." Clotaldo listens, and then leaves him with these warning words—

"Yet in dreams it were well done,
Sigismund, to honour one
Who has watched and loved thee so,
Since good does not perish, though
It be wrought in dream alone. (*Exit.*)

SIGISMUND.

Truth—and let us then restrain
This the fierceness of our pride,
Lay this wilfulness aside,
Lest perchance we dream again;
And we shall so who remain
In a world of wonder thrown,
Where to live and dream are one.
For experience tells me this,
Each is dreaming what he is,
Till the time his dream is done.
The king dreams himself a king,

And in this conceit he lives,
Lords it, high commandment gives,
Till his lent applause takes wing,
Death on light wings scattering,
Or converting (oh sad fate!)
Into ashes all his state;
How can men so lust to reign,
When to waken them again
From their false dream death doth wait.
And the rich man dreams no less
'Mid his wealth which brings more cares,
And the poor man dreams he bears
All his want and wretchedness;
Dreams, whom anxious thoughts oppress,
Dreams, who for high place contends,
Dreams, who injures and offends;
And though none are rightly 'ware,
All are dreaming that they are
In this life until death ends.
I am dreaming—I lie here,
Laden with this fetter's weight,
And I dreamed that I of late
Did in fairer sort appear.
What is life? a frenzy mere;
What is life? e'en that we deem;
A conceit, a shadow all,
And the greatest good is small.
Nothing is, but all doth seem;
Dreams within dreams, still we dream."—(D.)

The third Act gives Sigismund an opportunity of showing that this personal experience of the unsubstantial nature of earthly things has not been wholly lost on him. The people of Poland do not like being placed under a Duke of Muscovy's rule, and resist Astolpho's proclamation as heir-apparent; rising in arms to procure Sigis-

mund's freedom. Soldiers break into his prison and offer to defend his rights. "Must I dream once more?" asks the Prince—"nay, since I have been taught that life is but an empty vision, why need I be bewildered by fresh phantoms? I have had enough of them:"—

"I desire not borrowed greatness,
Nor imaginary glories,[1]
Pomps fantastical, illusions
With the faintest breath that bloweth
Of the night wind perishing:
As the buds and bloom disclosèd
By the flowering almond tree,
With such timeless haste unfolded
That the first breath dims their brightness,
Tarnishing and staining wholly
All the light and loveliness
Which its roseate tresses boasted.
Now I know, I know you now,
And I know there falls no other
Lot to every one that dreams.
Cheats avail with me no longer;
Undeceived, now know I surely
That our life a dream is only."—(D.)

The soldiers point to the crowds gathering outside to salute the son of their king. "I have seen the same things before as clearly," says Sigismund, "and yet it was a dream. Nevertheless, let us dream once more,—only this time not without having in due remembrance the coming waking." Faithful to this resolution, Sigismund, when placed at the head of his adherents, checks his rising anger at Clotaldo's refusal to abide with him and be his guide in his new life; and permits him to go where his loyalty to the old king calls him, saying,

[1] Assonants in *o, e*

"Since good, wrought even in our dreams, does not perish, I wish to act nobly:—

"Be it thus or thus—if truth
For the truth's sake; if the other,
To win friends against the time
When this fleeting dream is over."—(D.)

Meantime Rosaura, grieved at Clotaldo's refusal to revenge her on his preserver, the faithless Astolpho, girds on her sword once more, and meets Sigismund as he advances with his victorious army; imploring him to maintain her rights. Sigismund is sorely tempted to make an unworthy use of the power thus given him over the beauty so coveted by him before. Why not make the dream as pleasant as possible till the hour of waking comes? Then wiser thoughts come to him, and he adds—

"But I do confute mine own self
With the reasons I advance.
If a dream, an empty glory,
Who for empty glory here
Would an heavenly glory forfeit?
What past good is not a dream?
Who has tasted blisses lofty,
And says not, whenever these are
In his memory revolvèd,
Doubtless I have dreamed it all
Which I saw? but if my knowledge
Tells me this, and if desire
Is a flame that brightly gloweth,
Yet is turned to dead cold ashes
By the wind that breathes the softest,
Let us then the eternal aim at;
Fame that no decreases offers,
Blisses that not ever slumber,
Majesty that ne'er reposes."—(D.)

"It is a prince's part to bestow honour, not to take it away," he adds. And with the words, "Rosaura, regard for thine honour makes me avert mine eyes from thy beauty," he leaves the fair suppliant hastily.

Soon after the father's forces meet the son's in battle. The old king is defeated; and, expecting no mercy at the hands of the ill-treated Sigismund, is about to take to flight when a slight incident changes his purpose. A wounded man, shot in the very hiding-place to which he had run for safety, falls dying at his feet with the warning—

> "Since no safety can there be
> 'Gainst the force of destiny
> And the inclemency of fate,
> Therefore 'tis in vain thou fliest
> Death to which thou draw'st more nigh;
> Oh, take heed, for thou must die,
> If it is God's will thou diest."—(M.)

These words seem to Basilius to pronounce sentence on the course which has led to his present danger. The doom which he strove to avert has come upon him through his very efforts to avoid it. He therefore bows his head to his fate; and, resisting the advice of his friends to try to flee further, goes forth to prostrate himself, as the stars foretold, before the feet of his victorious son, and thus, as he says, help heaven to keep its word.

Then it is that the wisdom taught to Sigismund by his dream-experience manifests itself in all its lustre. "Never," is his solemn reflection, "do those golden letters which the finger of God has traced for us on the azure scroll of heaven lie; the deceit comes from those

who penetrate their secrets to make a bad use of them. Witness my father, who, warned by them of my evil dispositions, adopted a course of treatment which might have enraged the gentlest, degraded the most generous, of minds. Ill-fortune cannot thus be vanquished, but rather helped forward. So we see to-day. A father—a monarch—kneels at my feet; and I have been powerless to impede the execution of that decree of fate which his superior age, valour, and wisdom could not conquer." He concludes by raising his father from the ground, and throwing himself in his turn at his feet as his subject, and, if needs be, his victim. "Thou hast overcome indeed, and art indeed my son," exclaims the enraptured Basilius; "the laurel and the palm are thy due." Sigismund completes his self-conquest by offering his own hand to the Princess Estrella (disengaged some time since from Astolpho by the discovery of his passion for Rosaura), and by requesting his cousin to fulfil his promise to the fair Muscovite. Astolpho demurs on the ground of the cloud which obscures her birth. Clotaldo at once dissipates it by stepping forth to proclaim Rosaura his own daughter; and, the prince readily consenting to be his son-in-law, the strangely interwoven fortunes of the wandering beauty and the prisoner of the tower are each at the self-same moment brought to a happy issue. All marvel at the change in Sigismund,—at a wisdom and discretion rare in the best taught of princes. But he answers, "Why wonder, since my teacher was a dream, from which I yet fear to awake and find myself once more in prison? Having learnt that human happiness passes away like a dream, I wish, while yet it lasts, to make a right use of it."

CHAPTER VIII.

HIS TRAGEDIES OF JEALOUSY.

CALDERON'S tragedies on this theme comprise one on "Herod and Mariamne," which has been compared both by Spanish and French critics to "Othello." The noble Asmonean princess, who, though smarting under a sense of deep wrong inflicted by her husband's order for her death, still pleads successfully for his life with Octavius, is indeed not unworthy to be likened to Desdemona; whom she further resembles, when, unrobing at the close of her last day, she weeps and listens to the song in which her unwitting handmaid summons death; instead of singing her own swan-song herself, like the hapless Venetian. But the catastrophe of the play is accidental. It was Octavius, not Mariamne, whom Herod sought to slay, when he flung the dagger (of old the predicted cause of his wife's death) unawares to quiver in her breast. The sea into which his despair, on finding what he has done, casts him, receives, not an Othello unable to survive the discovery of his wife's innocence, but the victim of adverse circumstances, who has no strength to bear up when the conflicting predic-

tions against which he has long striven fulfil themselves at last in his despite.[1]

Nor shall we find an Othello in the heroes of three terrible plays, in each of which a wife guilty, or presumed so, suffers death at her husband's hands. As has often been remarked, Calderon's vengeful husbands know little of "Hate, born of Love, and blind as he;" for their blows are prompted by wounded pride, rather than by outraged affection; they are executioners of the sentence given in Honour's court, which dooms to die as often for appearances as for realities; they have each a far better right than Othello had to style himself

> "An honourable murderer, if you like;
> For nought I did in hate, but all in honour."

Take for an instance "The Painter of his own Dishonour." Seraphina, the heroine of this play, is shot by her husband, the disguised artist, along with the man who, against her will, carried her from her home. Her own father and the father of her betrayer are alike present, when the slayer steps forth from his hiding-place, and addresses both them and the prince who sent him to paint the concealed beauty's picture in these words: "Behold a picture, painted with blood by the painter of his own dishonour. I am Don Juan de Roca. Ye all see your injuries before you. Kill me and avenge them: you, Don Pedro, because the fair one whom you gave me, I return to you a bleeding corpse! You, Don

[1] "Jealousy the Greatest Monster" (the play in question) is no truer to history than other, so-called, historical dramas of Calderon. "The dull, cold-blooded" Octavius is gallant in it beyond measure; and the fierce Idumean, Herod, is transformed in it beyond recognition.

Luis, because here lies your son, slain by my hand; and you, Prince, because I have painted with such red enamel the portrait you bespoke from me." No man takes up the challenge. All present feel that Juan has only done his duty as a Spaniard and a gentleman. "Flee, and I will protect your flight," says the Prince. "No need for that," say the two stern fathers; "we are obliged, not affronted, by the justice done on our two unhappy children." Don Juan bows gravely to them and departs. He has no third pistol in reserve for his own breast. He had loved Seraphina well, but not with the love with which Othello loved Desdemona.

A narration in a drama by Tirso de Molina, suggested to Calderon the catastrophe of "A secret Vengeance for a secret Affront,"—a more terrible play than even the one just mentioned. Its historical background is to be found in Sebastian of Portugal's unfortunate expedition to Africa. His brave subject, Don Lope de Almeida, quits his service to marry Leonor, and returns to it when his brief dream of married happiness is over,—doubtless to perish with his king. His bravery, approved at home and abroad, enlists the sympathies of the spectators; and yet they cannot refuse their pity to Leonor, who, married to Lope by proxy, on the false report of her Spanish lover's death, quits Spain, her native country, under her uncle's charge, to meet the husband whom, as yet, she has never seen; and, while waiting for him beside a river, has an interview with a jewel merchant, who proves to be her first love (not slain, only wounded), Luis de Benavides. He has sent her a diamond ring as a specimen of his wares; and she has recognised it as a love-token given by herself. But with a self-com-

mand and power of dissimulation which early show the audience to what dangerous keeping Don Lope is about to intrust his honour, Luis and Leonor betray themselves neither by word nor sign. The uncle and the attendants think they hear a jeweller's artful recommendation of his wares, and a customer's courteous refusal, when they are really listening to the bitter reproaches of a disappointed lover, and to his lady's exculpations of herself. "Here," says the merchant, "is a rich clasp; here is a diamond Cupid; and—

> "I a heart, in which no stone
> False is found, here with me bring;
> Likewise many a precious ring—
> See memorials fair in one.
> But an emerald[1] I deplore,
> Stolen from me on my road
> For its tint that perfect showed;—
> I the like shall see no more.
> By it shone a sapphire blue;[2]
> But the emerald they took
> Only, leaving me to look
> On that stone of azure hue:
> So I could not choose but cry,
> Why, thus cruel, take away
> Hope, yet leave with me to stay,
> By this token, jealousy?
> If, fair ladye, you approve,
> I will place before your eyes
> That same heart, those memories,
> That bright clasp, that radiant Love."

Leonor hides, with Spartan firmness, the anguish

[1] Hope.

[2] Jealousy: the green-eyed monster wears a different colour in Spain.

caused by this appeal. She cannot draw back now, since she is already wedded to another. So she answers, with seeming indifference:—

"Even should your jewels be
Fully equal to their praise,
You upon the worst of days
Here have come to show them me.
I had pleasure felt (how great!)
Mustering o'er their beauties' sum,
Had you only earlier come;
As it is you come too late.
What would men of me report,
If, when I have given my hand,
Waiting till my husband land,
Here I at such hour could sport,—
Worse, my mind could wholly give
To that heart of jewels rare,
To that clasp, though firm and fair,
To that Love where flamelets live?
Take your diamond too, though one
I in it must lose, I know,
Which with faithful light will glow,
Beauteous like the very sun.
On my cold unwillingness
Seek not now to cast the blame;
Blame yourself, too late who came,—
Hence flows all your ill success."

Don Lope's boat is seen approaching; and while the rest go out to receive him, Leonor is left a moment alone with Luis. He has just time to upbraid her with her fickleness, and she to answer, "Had I not wept for thee as dead, never shouldst thou have styled me forgetful or changeable," when the husband, whom, in the bitterness of her soul, she now calls enemy, advances to greet her.

Luis hears in the dissembling words of courtesy which the bride addresses to Don Lope the acknowledgment of her unchanged affection for himself; and resolves to follow her into Portugal, saying, after he has seen the couple depart: "Better die of pleasure than of pain, be killed by love than by jealousy; and Leonor love I must, even at the cost of my life."

The next act shows him carrying out this wrong design. Don Lope notes a form too frequently hanging about his house in Lisbon. Worse than that, he and his friend Juan (a model of discreet friendship) all but surprise the cavalier inside Lope's house. His excuse, when at last seen by the husband, is a very specious one; but there is a flurry about Leonor's manner which would have been absent had she known nothing of the stranger, who said he ran in to avoid an enemy's pursuit. Then, too, when King Sebastian invites Lope to follow him in his African expedition, it is the newly-wedded wife who (though with pretended unwillingness) consents to her husband's departure,—the faithful Juan who urges him to stay. Under these circumstances Don Lope appears to continue strangely blind, and his friend thinks that he ought to open his eyes. Yet, before undertaking so delicate an office, he feels his way by putting to him an imaginary case. "I have a friend," he says, "who has done a thing which is leading men to cast reflections on his honour. Ought I to tell him what they say about him?" Don Lope comprehends his meaning, and replies—"If you ask my advice, keep silence. Were I in such a case, and were the best friend I have to come and tell me I was dishonoured, I should slay him on the spot."

Don Juan says no more; but the king ventures to give his trusty follower a hint, by regretting that he must forego his help in the approaching campaign. They have met accidentally, when Sebastian exclaims—

"'Tis thou, Don Lope! Ah! if I that sword
Of yours in Afric could but have, the lord
Soon should I be of all the Moorish pride.

LOPE.

How should my sword hang idly by my side,
To rust in peaceful sheath, for useless known,
When you, my noble master, draw your own?
I go, with you, to conquer or be slain:
What could in Portugal my steps detain
At such a time?

THE KING.

Are you not married?

LOPE.

True,
My lord, but marriage-ties cannot undo
My being myself: rather they bid me claim
In right of double honour double fame.

THE KING.

How, being wed of late,
Will your wife take this?

LOPE.

As an honour great,
To you, for such a high intent,
A soldier in her husband to present;
For, brave and manly-hearted, her worst woe
Would be him severed from your side to know.
So I, who fought for mine own fame before,
Now fight for mine and then for hers yet more;
With such desires as these I well may leave
My wife a while.

THE KING.

For truth I all receive:
But yet I spoke because I thought such gladness
It were unjust so swift to turn to sadness;
And, great though this emprise on which we roam,
You might, Don Lope, be worse missed at home."
(*Exit with his attendants.*)

Don Lope stands thunderstruck. "Is my affront become so public that it has come to the ears of the king?" he thinks. "I will go with him; but on my return I will inflict such a chastisement on the offenders as the whole world shall hear of." Just at this point in his reflections, Don Juan is heard engaged in a combat with some adversaries; who, however, fly from his vigorous blows. He enters and explains: "I had to fight these men; for I overheard them talking of my old misfortune. Vainly have I washed my honour in the blood of a cavalier who once gave me the lie; I am always known, not as the man who avenged the affront, but as the man who received it. Such is life," he adds, turning significantly to the friend whom he evidently desires to warn by his own example. "Often has the vengeance spoken, where the offence would have kept silence." Don Lope remains alone, pondering these last words, and reflecting—

"Should I then deal vengeful blow
For the wrong which wounds me so,
I but spread it far and wide,—
Since, by vengeance, loud is cried
What misfortune mutters low.
Let my courage fierce and fell
'Venge that hurt I now deplore;

Yet deceived the crowd will tell,
This is he the wrong who bore;
Not, 'Tis he who paid it well.'
Thus should I my hand to-day
Bathe in blood, that blood would say,
'Come, behold his injury;'
Since my vengeance known must be,
Where my wrong concealed might stay.
Therefore not in public gaze
Let me seek it (heavens!), but lurk,
Hiding it in darksome maze;
Since, when wronged, the prudent work,
Patient, crafty, by mute ways."

In the midst of these meditations appears their subject, Don Luis. He is reading a note from Leonor; in which she at last takes the decisive and fatal step of inviting him to a secret interview, in the country-house where she is to live during her husband's absence with the king. It is on the other side of the bay. The boatmen are all occupied, and Luis is vexed to think that the means of crossing may be wanting to him. A barque is ready for Lope; and on ascertaining the Spaniard's wish to go across, the Portuguese politely offers him a place in it. The infatuated Luis gladly accepts the service of the man whom he is preparing to wrong so deeply; and each expresses his satisfaction in an aside:—

LOPE.

"You with me shall cross. (*Aside.*) I see
Nigh my vengeance-hour at last.

LUIS (*aside*).

Who has in the world surpassed
Ever my felicity?

LOPE (*aside*).

He is given to my hands,
By those hands to die to-day.

LUIS (*aside*).

Think! the husband shows the way
Where the wife with welcome stands!"

The boatman is asked to wait a minute to give a message to Don Lope's servant. "You had better not get in without me," he says. "The rope which holds my boat is a bad one." The two gentlemen embark notwithstanding, Don Luis murmuring to himself—

"Thus himself he takes me where
I his honour may bedim.

LOPE (*aside*).

I, in this wise, carry him
Where his life I need not spare."

A minute later the boatman turns round and sees the boat drifting out into the sea,—as he fears, to the certain destruction of the two who have despised his warning.

Then the scene changes. We stand in the evening light and watch Leonor awaiting her husband's arrival; conscious of her guilty secret, yet hardening herself in her false security. Don Juan joins her; and together they hear a cry for help on the waters, at which Leonor starts, for it is that of a voice only too well known to her. Then through the gathering twilight a swimmer struggles to land; and wet, but still holding a dagger, Don Lope stands before his wife. The water has washed the blood from his weapon; so there is no outward witness to contradict him as he details the misfortune

which has befallen him. His boat has been upset and his companion drowned. "A Castilian gentleman," so he says, "whom I strove in vain to save, named—unless my memory play me false,—Don Luis de Benavides." At the news of his death Leonor swoons; Lope has her carried into the house, remarking to his friend that it was no wonder that the thought of her husband's imminent peril had made her faint. Then follows a soliloquy, in which he prepares to stab his wife for her purposed crime, as he has already stabbed her intended accomplice; and to call in fire to hide his second act of vengeance, as the water had hid his first.

"For my intents
I can safely trust alone
To the ever-silent shown
Care of the Four Elements.
One half of my vengeance dire,
There I air and water gave;
Here the other half shall have
Of my griefs the earth and fire."

He is as good as his word. The king, with the Duke of Braganza, and his train, are drawing near the spot whence they are to embark for Africa; when a terrible spectacle disturbs their enjoyment of the night's calm beauty, and the monarch's tender and hopeful farewells to the beloved country which he is never to see again. Don Lope's mansion is in flames; into which they, with difficulty, detain his friend, Juan, from precipitating himself. His sacrifice is, however, not needed. The master of the house extricates himself alive from its burning ruins, carrying his wife in his arms: only she, alas! is dead, having perished in the stifling smoke,—as

her disconsolate husband *says*, amid panegyrics on her virtues, and tears and sobs at his own irreparable loss. That loss, however, as he tells the king, has one compensation:—

> "This sad horror, hap most fearful,
> Yet one consolation leaves me,
> And 'tis that I now can serve you;
> For since thus ill fate has freed me,
> I can not be '*missed at home.*'
> I will go with you, a seeker
> Where to end my life, if haply
> Griefs like mine can e'er be ended."

Semi-oriental in tone as is this tragedy, and horrible with its ever-brooding mystery of suspicion—sharply as in it the poniard, dipped in the "waters of jealousy," cuts asunder the most sacred of human ties, it yet, perhaps, deserves the preference which Archbishop Trench has expressed for it over the "Physician of his own Honour,"—the most famous play of Calderon of the class to which it belongs. The death we have witnessed, ghastly as it is, yet at least cannot be called—like the catastrophe of "The Physician"—the execution of the guiltless. Fit justice is meted to the accomplice, and the executioner's own hands are clean. The wife whom he slays was moreover his first, as we feel she will have been his latest, love.

In all these particulars "The Physician of his own Honour" differs from "The Secret Affront." Its hero, Don Gutierre de Solis, was betrothed to the lady Leonor; but an unmerited aspersion on her fair fame causes him to reject her, and to wed another. His love for Mencia is therefore of recent date. His rival, Prince Henry of

Trastamar, quits Seville betimes; but, had he stayed there, the indications afforded scarcely lead us to think that Gutierre would have ventured to strike his sovereign's brother. Lastly, and most important, Dona Mencia, is innocent throughout. She can appeal to the prince himself to vouch for the fact that his devoted courtship ever found her cold. Not that she did not love him; but she loved honour more. Her dignified answer to his reproaches on her marriage does not even acknowledge so much as this; and from that answer she does not swerve, even in the perilous interview which Henry afterwards steals with her in her garden, in which he is so nearly surprised by her husband. But to that husband Mencia does not dare to tell the truth; and appearances go on becoming more and more fatally against her. The prince has dropped a dagger in the garden, and Gutierre has found it. On another evening Mencia's husband steals up to her as she sleeps in a summer-house. She mistakes him in the gloom for her unwelcome lover, and addresses to him the words which might have destroyed the peace of a less sensitive mind: "Your Highness does wrong to imperil me a second time. *Do you think I can put out the light every evening and get you forth in safety, as I did at your last visit.*" Worse is yet to come. Gutierre carries the dagger and his complaint to the king—Pedro the Cruel, as we style him; the Justicer, as a favourable section of his own subjects termed him. The king reproves his brother sharply within hearing of Gutierre, whom he has bidden to listen unseen to their interview. The effect of his reproaches, as far as he is himself concerned, is Henry's departure from Seville,—the commencement of

that quarrel, which was only ended by the deadly blow from a brother's hand, which laid Pedro low beneath the walls of Montiel.[1] But, for the luckless Mencia, their consequences are yet more tragic; since Henry's defence of his own conduct sounds in her husband's ears like an avowal of her guilt. Last, and worst, Gutierre surprises his wife in the act of writing to the prince, imploring him not to leave Seville; yet her purpose in doing this is merely to avoid the compromising reports concerning the occasion of his absence, which she knows would be quickly spread.

Mencia, then, is as pure in conduct, if not so pure in heart, and far from being as guileless, as Desdemona; but the apparent proof of her guilt is strong as was that which destroyed

"The gentle lady wedded to the Moor;"

and, bearing in mind that to Gutierre honour is more than life, more even than love,—a thing that, like the ermine of the fable, cannot see one stain on its perfect white and live,—who can wonder that he takes up the pen (dropped by his fainting wife when he snatched the letter from her) and writes her sentence with it thus: "Love adores, but honour abhors thee: the one slays, the other gives thee warning. Thou hast yet two hours to live; thou art a Christian—save thy soul—thy life is past saving."

Few more tragic situations can be imagined than that of Mencia after she has read this scroll of doom; when the silence of the house in which no servant answers her

[1] See "The Death of Don Pedro" and "The Proclamation of King Henry" in Lockhart's 'Spanish Ballads.'

call, and the locked door of her own apartment with its grated windows looking out on a high-walled garden, convince her that from its decree no appeal is open to her. Horrible, too, beyond most dramatic horrors, is the succeeding scene, when (on the expiration of the two hours' respite) Gutierre enters the outer room, leading a surgeon with bandaged eyes, whom he has compelled at the dagger's point to do his bidding: while, in the inner chamber, tapers burn by a death-bed, on which lies the veiled form of Mencia, with a crucifix by her side. The surgeon goes in, as he is bid, to open her veins; while Gutierre hoarsely murmurs, "I am about to cure my sick honour by a bleeding: many cures cost blood." "I die innocent: may heaven never demand my blood of thee,"[1] sounds in stifled accents from the inner gloom, and then there is silence.

Now in the street outside patrols, with a single attendant, King Pedro—stolen forth, like Haroun Alraschid, to learn what his people are doing and saying about his rupture with his brother. His presence saves the surgeon's life; whom Gutierre meant to poniard to prevent his strange tale from coming abroad, but whom he leaves in the street, blindfolded as he is, at the sight of a witness. The man tells his story to the king, adding that he shall know the house again despite of its master's precaution; for he took care, as he left it, to smear his bloody hand over the door. In the cold grey light of dawn Pedro betakes himself to the street where Gutierre's town-house is; and, rather with grief than surprise, beholds the red token on its portal. At this moment comes by, on her way to early mass, Leonor, the

[1] So we learn from the surgeon's recital to the king.

rejected of Gutierre; whose cries for justice against her defamer have been heard by the king. He sees his way to right her, now that heaven has so signally smitten her adversary, and bids her wait a moment by his side. It is not long before, with cries of despair, Gutierre issues from his house, bewailing the *accident* (a bandage displaced after a bleeding) which has deprived him of the best of wives. Through the wide-opened door, in a distant recess, is seen, lying white and motionless, the fair woman who bore herself, on the whole, so well in the hard combat between love and duty; and whom, ere love could vanquish, the rudely-flung truncheon has recalled from the weary lists. King Pedro gives one start of horror, then bids them hide the ghastly spectacle, and prepares to do justice alike to the living and the dead. "You are now free to espouse Leonor," he says to Gutierre; "her character has been abundantly cleared: marry her at once."

"*Gutierre.* Let me weep a little longer: scarcely saved from the storm, would you have me tempt the sea once more.

King Pedro. I command it.

Gu. A word with your Majesty in private. What if I should again find your brother disguised in my house?

King P. Give no credence to suspicions.

Gu. How if I once more discover Prince Henry's dagger in my chamber?

King P. Servants may be to blame for that.

Gu. How if he hovers round my house both by night and by day?

King P. Then complain to me.

Gu. How if I do so, and overhear something still worse?

King P. What matter if, as all own, her honour be a wall none can shake?

Gu. But what can I do if I intercept a letter begging of the prince to stay?

King P. There is a remedy for everything.

Gu. Can there be one for this?

King P. Certainly.

Gu. And what?

King P. Why, your own.

Gu. And that is?

King P. To bleed her.

Gu. What say you?

King P. Go: have your door washed. There is a blood-red print upon it.

Gu. Men in office, my lord, set over their portals shields emblazoned with their arms. My profession is honour; and so I have set upon my door my bloody hand, for honour can never be washed clean again except by blood.

King P. Then give that hand to Leonor. I know she deserves it.

Gu. I give it. But observe, Leonor, it is dyed with blood.

Leo. I neither marvel nor tremble at the sight.

Gu. Take notice that I have acted once as physician to my honour, and am not likely to forget the art.

Leo. Cure *me* in the same way,—should I need it."

So ends a play well suited in its merciless severity to the days in which its scene is laid; interesting by its well-drawn picture of a famous king of Castile, by the skill with which the meshes of an inextricable ruin are woven around the hapless Mencia, and by the quick retribution dealt out, alike for her wrongs and for another's, to her destroyer; but piteous beyond measure, and almost beyond endurance, in its delineation of the cruel result of Prince Henry's unpunished wooing—the stealthy step, the midnight stab, the shedding of that innocent blood, which was long seen by the popular imagination uneffaced and uneffaceable on the portal of the great house of Solis in Seville.

CHAPTER IX.

HIS "ALCALDE OF ZALAMEA" AND MOORISH TRAGEDIES.

LOPE DE VEGA'S dramas of humble life (only a few of which have been preserved to us) have been little imitated by Calderon. His "Luis Perez, the Galician," is a bold robber of some birth and breeding; and the only time when he deliberately elects to tread in the steps of his great predecessor among the low-born and uncourtly is in his "Mayor of Zalamea"—a striking dramatic version of an occurrence said to have been real. Mendo, the hero of de Vega's "Wise Man at Home,"[1] is thought to have given Calderon hints for the character of his peasant judge; and that character is well drawn and natural, marked by many curious and individual traits. Lope de Figueroa, the brave commander of the Flanders regiment, quartered in the rich yeoman, Peter Crespo's, house, on the march to Lisbon, is equally distinctly painted—with his quick and choleric temper, his soldier's oaths, and his real generosity of disposition. How well this brief dialogue sets the two men before us! Crespo, who has secluded his beautiful and discreet daughter Isabel from the prying gaze of the soldiers, has been an-

[1] "El Cuerdo en su Casa."

noyed to find her privacy invaded by a young captain, Don Alvaro. Don Lope, luckily for all parties, has arrived in time to prevent a fight, has prudently ordered his intrusive officer to seek other quarters, and has lodged himself in Crespo's house.[1]

"*Crespo.* I really ought to thank you heartily for coming just as you did, sir, else I'd done for myself.

Lope. How so?

Cres. I should have killed this popinjay.

Lope. What, sir, a captain in his Majesty's service?

Cres. Ay, a general, if he insulted me.

Lope. I tell you, whoever lays his little finger on the humblest private in the regiment, I'll hang him.

Cres. And I tell you, whoever points his little finger at my honour, I'll cut him down before hanging.

Lope. Know you not you are bound by your allegiance to submit?

Cres. To all cost of property, yes; but of honour, no, no, no! My goods and chattels—ay, and my life—are the king's, but my honour is my own soul's, and that is—God Almighty's.

Lope. 'Fore God, there's some truth in what you say.

Cres. 'Fore God, there ought to be, for I've been some years saying it."—(F.)

The independent peasant and the kind-hearted if testy Don Lope get on well together. Isabel and her cousin Ines are summoned from their seclusion to do honour to the brave old soldier, as he sups under their vine by the fountain in their garden. And when the voice of the wicked captain's serenaders[2] outside disturbs their tran-

[1] Mr Fitzgerald's vigorous prose suits the homely dialogue, which is of course in verse in the Spanish.

[2] The song they sing (agreeably to Calderon's plan of quoting favourite songs in his plays) is this pretty one of Gongora's :—

quillity, it is Lope who sees that his kind host and his son take no harm from the fray into which their natural indignation carries them, and who sternly commands their disturber to march his men forthwith out of Zalamea.

Then, leaving his worthy entertainer safe, as he thinks, Don Lope prepares to precede the king to Lisbon; little thinking of the terrible shame and grief which are about to fall on the house which has received him so hospitably. With him goes Juan, Crespo's son, anxious to begin a career of arms under such good auspices. The father's homely wisdom as he blesses his son's departure has been often commended. It has a Shakespearean ring.

"*Crespo.* By God's grace, boy, thou com'st of honourable, if of humble, stock. Bear both in mind, so as neither to be

---

"Las flores del romero,
Niña Isabel;
Hoy son flores azulés,
Y mañana serán miel;"—

thus charmingly (if diffusely) paraphrased in Mr Fitzgerald's version:—

1.

"Ah for the red spring rose,
Down in the garden growing,
Fading as fast as it blows,
Who shall arrest its going?
Peep from thy window and tell,
Fairest of flowers, Isabel.

2.

Wither it would, but the bee
Over the blossom hovers,
And the sweet life ere it flee
With as sweet art recovers.
Sweetest at night in his cell,
Fairest of flowers, Isabel."

daunted from trying to rise, nor puffed up so as to be sure to fall. How many have done away the memory of a defect by carrying themselves modestly; while others, again, have gotten a blemish only by being too proud of being born without one. There is a just humility that will maintain thine own dignity, and yet make thee insensible to many a rub that galls the proud spirit. Be courteous in thy manner, and liberal of thy purse, for 'tis the hand to the bonnet and in the pocket that make friends in this world; of whom to gain a good one all the gold the sun breeds in India, or the universal sea sucks down, were a cheap purchase. Speak no evil of women. I tell thee, the meanest of them deserves our respect, for of women do we not all come? . . . My son, God bless thee! There!—and now go, for I am beginning to play the woman."—(F.)

Such is the man, displayed to us in the two first Acts, in all his abundance of plain, practical common-sense, upon whom, when the third Act of the play begins, the most horrible of undeserved misfortunes has fallen. Upon him has come that calamity which Virginius only feared; and, bound to a tree by the satellites of the miscreant who violently tore his daughter from him, he has had no opportunity of using his knife even to give her such deadly succour as the Roman father bestowed upon his child. When, half mad with shame and sorrow, the unhappy Isabel rushes through the wood in the early morning light, to fall, with wet cheeks and dishevelled hair, at the feet of her father (whose pride she was but the day before), imploring him for death, the boon, if given, would still come too late. It is thus that Calderon depicts her anguish, while as yet she has no other witness than the dewdrops and the dawn, from which she shrinks as "a thing reproved:"—

ISABEL.

"Never dawn upon these eyelids[1]
Light of day so fair that glitters,
Lest thy name with shamed abhorrence
Of my very self should fill me!
And, oh thou, of all the star-host
Flying spring-tide,[2] swift as brilliant,
Give, oh! give not to the dawning
Place to tread thy plain's blue stillness,
Blotting out thy vision peaceful
By her smiles through tears that quiver!
Or, if come she must, then let her
Come all tearful, smiles forbidden.
Do thou longer, greatest planet,
In the sea's cold foam-bed linger!
Let the night her tremulous empire
For this once extend, nor swiftly
Fly, as is her wont; so causing
Men who see thy godhead listen
To my prayers, to say thine actions
Freewill guides, fate does not fix them.
Wherefore shouldst thou wish to rise
To behold in my sad history
Sin the most enormous found,
Cruelty of all most wicked,
Which, heaven wills, with cry for vengeance
Should in man's account be written?
But, alas! alas! thou seemest
Harsh of rule, too, nor dost listen
To my prayers; for I no sooner
Begged thee to delay, than glimmers
Thy great torch, in awful beauty,
From the mountain-tops uplifted.
Now it fronts me full. Ah me,
With so many pains to sting me;

[1] Assonants, *i*, *e*. [2] The morning-star.

By such evil fortune hunted,
So much anguish, hast thou risen,
Too, in wrath against mine honour?
Whither can I go? ah! whither?"

But when she has found her father, unbound him, and bidden him slay her, Crespo tenderly raises her from the ground; and, with words of pious submission, leads her back to her home. On their way they meet the notary of the town. He has news for them. Crespo has just been elected Mayor of Zalamea, and is wanted immediately; as a captain of the king's troops — who passed through the day before—has been carried back into the town severely wounded by an unknown hand. Not an unknown one to his hearers; for the unhappy girl has just told her father how, by a strange accident, her brother appeared on the scene too late to save, but not too late to avenge, her.

Crespo hastens to assume his office, and, wand in hand, proceeds to arrest the captain; who (his wound proving, after all, but a slight one) is deeply mortified to find that what he considers a venial indiscretion has exposed a nobleman like himself to such an insult at peasant hands. However, the court-martial to which he appeals will, he feels persuaded, promptly set all to rights; and, so assured, he rudely rejects the father's touching request to take all he has and restore his daughter's honour by marrying her. Fortunately for the ill-fated Isabel, Don Alvaro's pride leaves her to seek the far safer asylum of a convent. Crespo condescends to tears and to the most abject entreaties; but, on being brutally repulsed, rises to his feet, confronts the wrong-doer "in his rights as a man," and orders him straight to prison.

"*Captain.* To prison! You can't do it!

Crespo. We'll see.

Capt. Am I a *bonâ-fide* officer or not?

Cres. And am I a straw magistrate or not? Away with him.

Capt. The king shall hear of this.

Cres. He shall—doubt it not—perhaps to-day, and shall judge between us. By-the-by, you had best deliver up your sword before you go.

Capt. My sword?

Cres. Under arrest, you know.

Capt. Well, take it with due respect then.

Cres. Oh yes, and you too. Hark ye (*to the constables*), carry the captain with due respect to prison, and there, with due respect, clap on him a chain and handcuffs; and not only him, but all that were with him (all with due respect), respectfully taking care they communicate not together. For I mean, with all due respect, to examine them on the business, and if I get sufficient evidence, with the most infinite respect of all, I'll wring you by the neck till you're dead, by God!

Capt. Set a beggar on horseback!" (*They lead him off.*) —(F.)

The soldier who brought Don Alvaro back to Zalamea, seeing his peril, rushes off with the news to Don Lope; who returns at full speed to deliver an officer of his from such an unseemly scrape. Who the mayor is of whom he has so much to complain, he tells Crespo at their first encounter that he does not know, adding—

"But, by the Lord, I'll thrash him within an inch of his life.

Crespo. You will?

Don L. Will I?

Cres. But will he stand your thrashing?

Don L. Stand it, or not, he shall have it.

Cres. Besides, might your captain happen to deserve what he met with?

Don L. And, if he did, *I* am his judge, not a trumpery mayor.

Cres. This mayor is an odd sort of customer to deal with, I assure you.

Don L. Some obstinate clodpole, I suppose?

Cres. So obstinate, that if he made up his mind to hang your captain, he'll do it.

Don L. Will he? I'll see to that. And if you wish to see, too, only tell me where I can find him.

Cres. Oh, close here.

Don L. You know him?

Cres. Very well, I believe.

Don L. And who is he?

Cres. Peter Crespo."—(F.)

Each is obstinate. Crespo names the depositions which fully establish the captain's guilt. Lope insists on the prisoner being given up to him; and brings the conversation to an end by ordering his regiment into the market-place to force open the prison if necessary. Crespo follows him, whispering, "I will do what has to be done first."

The scene in the square is a tumultuous one. An attack seems imminent, to meet which a vigorous defence is preparing; when shouts in the distance announce the approach of King Philip the Second, about to march through Zalamea on his way to be crowned at Lisbon. Both parties refer their dispute to him. He stops, hears both sides, reads the depositions, and then says to Crespo—

"The charge is substantiated, but you have no authority to execute the sentence. You must give up the prisoner.

Crespo. I can hardly do that, my lord, because, as in this little town there is only one tribunal, it executes its own sentences, and this sentence is executed already."

And thereupon the prison-gates open, and the criminal is seen, seated, but dead, the fatal garrote round his neck.

"*King.* And you have dared to do this?

Crespo. Your majesty said the sentence was just, and what is well said cannot be ill done.

. . . . . .

King. At least you might have beheaded him as an officer and a gentleman.

Cres. Please your majesty, the Hidalgos hereabout lead such good lives that our executioner is out of practice in beheading.

King. Don Lope, the thing is done, and the death righteously inflicted; that being so, an error in a matter of detail is a trifle. Let no soldier stay behind; march them off at once, for we must reach Portugal without delay. (*To Crespo.*) I appoint you Mayor of Zalamea for life."—(F.)

The superiority of the peasant to the gentleman in this play is a thing the possibility of which we should have scarcely expected to find so frankly acknowledged, even in a solitary instance, by its courtly author. The strong sense which he here evinces of the sanctity of the humblest home, and the depth of his sympathy with the honest pride and holy sorrows of the lowly, have brought their own rich reward with them, in the heightened power of conceiving and depicting character which makes "The Mayor of Zalamea" pre-eminent among the dramas of Calderon—inspiring a strong regret that he sought similar sources of poetic interest so seldom, and

that amid scores of featureless Don Diegos and Don Juans he has given to us but one honest Pedro Crespo.

The catastrophe of this tragedy resembles that of a still more painful one by the same author, "Three Judgments at a Blow," in which to save the life of a youth, condemned to die for striking his supposed father, Don Mendo (Prime Minister to Peter the Fourth of Aragon), his real parent, interposes his authority in vain: while Blanche, his nominal mother, vainly unveils to the relentless monarch the sister's shame which her well-meant deception has hidden for so many years. Before their eyes and those of Don Lope de Urrea, Blanche's husband, the criminal is suddenly revealed; already executed, and holding in his stiffening hand the king's sentence on his crime, and not on it only, but on Mendo's early sin and Blanche's falsehood, expressed in these words:—

"He that reviles and strikes whom he believes
His father, let him die for't; and let those
Who have disgraced a noble name, or joined
An ill imposture, see his doom, and show
Three judgments summed up in a single blow."—(F.)

But here justice wears sterner and less attractive features than in the "Mayor of Zalamea." Strange to say, Peter of Aragon proves inferior to the dreaded despot alike of history and the drama, Philip the Second; and the merciless severity of the former contrasts unfavourably with the latter's ready perception that his rustic magistrate's bold deed proceeded after all from a just view of the majesty of law, and with his promptness in setting the seal of his royal approval on Crespo's resolute assertion of the equality of all classes before that august tribunal.

Don Lope de Figueroa (whose military bluster on behalf of his disreputable subaltern does not prevent his seeing the justice of his execution, or parting on good terms with his worthy friend, the mayor) reappears, though in a less prominent capacity, in another deeply interesting tragedy—"Love after Death." It is founded on a touching tale told by Hita in his "Guerras de Granada," who says that he learned it from the lips of Tuzani, the principal actor in it. Its scene is laid during the revolt of the Moriscoes in the reign of Philip the Second; and its only anachronism is the intentional one of speaking of the battle of Lepanto as past when that revolt broke out, in order to increase the fame of the great man on whom devolved the painful duty of suppressing it,—Don John of Austria. As in "The Mayor of Zalamea," we have seen Calderon rise superior to all the prejudices of rank, so we shall see him, even yet more commendably, rise in "Love after Death" above those of his nation and religion, and bespeak our sympathies wholly for the defeated side. With a generosity surpassing that of Shakespeare towards the despised Jewish race, he contemplates the long agony of an expiring nation without exultation, though for centuries the foes of his own people; and his pity for its sorrowful downfall from its high estate makes him forget the wrongs of Christian captives and the profanation of Christian churches. The long years during which the crescent cast its baleful influence over Spain vanish from his eyes, as they fill with tears while gazing on its blood-red setting.

The play begins with a lively picture of that state of affairs in Granada which led to the revolt of the Moriscoes. It shows us their nobles smarting under the distrust

of their sovereign and the disdain of the old Christian grandees,—and the humbler class irritated beyond endurance by Philip the Second's unwise decrees. "The dying embers of that great fire which of old burned throughout Spain" are stirred up into a flame by the royal ordinance which prohibits to the Moriscoes the use of the dress and language of their forefathers, and the observance of their national festivals. There is a keen debate over the new law at the council-board of Granada; and Malec (an aged noble, descended from the Moorish kings) advises that, instead of its being hastily and harshly enforced, the Moriscoes should be gradually and gently weaned from their ancient customs. Mendoza, a haughty Castilian, not only opposes this wise counsel, but taunts its giver; and, as the altercation waxes hot, strikes the old man, as the proud Count of Lozano struck the aged father of the Cid. But Malec has no brave son to avenge his wrong—he has only one daughter, Clara, called the phœnix for her peerless beauty. It is thought by some of their colleagues that the deadly affront (on account of which Mendoza had been sent to prison) would be best repaired by his becoming the son-in-law of the man whom he has insulted. Clara, although loving, and beloved by, Alvaro Tuzani, consents to be made the victim of this reparation. It will cost her her life, she says; but as, not being a man, she has unhappily no such means of defending her parent's honour as the Cid had, she is ready to break her heart in its defence! So she says to her father—

> "Less the loss, since here defaced
> Lies, my lord, thy name, that I
> Should my life live wretchedly,

Than that thou shouldst live disgraced.
Could I but thy son have been,
Wrath had called me forth to-day,
Well to die, or well to slay;
As thy daughter, then, I mean
With such help as in me lies
Now to aid thee in thy strife,—
Give thy foe my hand as wife,
And show all men how I prize
Thy dear honour; since, defying
Men, I could not 'venge thee killing,
I at least am found here willing
To revenge thee now by dying."

Happily for herself, but unhappily for the Moriscoes and for Spain, Clara's self-sacrifice is not required. Mendoza proudly rejects the proposed terms of peace; and mortally affronts the nobles of Granada by giving them to understand that not even a descendant of their kings can be a fit match for one in whose veins flows the blue blood of Castile. His passion for Isabel, Tuzani's sister, has much to do with Mendoza's refusal of Clara; but all hope of success in that secret suit vanishes in the profound resentment called forth by this crowning insult.

The second Act of the drama opens on the revolt of the Moriscoes. Three years are supposed to have elapsed since the close of the first Act. The outbreak (cautiously delayed till all preparations were completed) has taken place, the streets of Granada have flowed with blood; and the Moriscoes have garrisoned three strong hill-towns, and hope to hold them till succours reach them from Africa, and till their brethren in Estremadura and Valencia can rise to join them. The Morisco queen, Isabel Tuzani (a Christian still at heart), finds it hard to

forget her former lover, Mendoza. Her brother, Alvaro, is at last about to celebrate his nuptials with Clara; who refused to wed him until the stain cast on her father's honour had been washed off by blood. Awaiting their coming in a lovely mountain-valley of the Alpuxarras, the king sees his wife look sad, and bids the musicians divert her melancholy; thus addressing her:—

"On soft grass that trees embower,
Trees that rise our rocks to crown,—
Where sweet spring in state set down
Summons round her every flower,
That her commonwealth in session
Each bright colour may disclose
And salute as queen the rose
Over Flora's rich possession,—
Seat thyself, fair spouse! Ye singers,
See if music can prevail
To chase from her sorrow pale,
And to dry the tear that lingers.
. . . . .
Sing, and from her beauty borrow
Your high theme. Sing; well agree
(Old allies in harmony!)
Music's sweetness and deep sorrow.

SONG.

Ah! my joys, your lips lock fast!
Whose ye are ye need not tell.
Ye are known for mine too well
By the short time that ye last."

These sounds fall with but ill augury on the ears of Clara and Alvaro, who now enter. Their wedding is, however, at once celebrated with all show of happiness, according to the Moorish custom, by the simple bestowal

and acceptance of the bridegroom's gifts. These are the rich jewels which are shortly to cost the ill-fated bride her life, and which are afterwards to give the clue by which her murderer is traced. But for the moment the brilliant gems sparkle cheerfully in the sunshine, while the enraptured Alvaro lays them at his beloved one's feet, saying—

> "Gifts to thee, fair paragon,
> Lose their worth, defective showing;
> Diamonds on the sun bestowing,
> I its due but give the sun.
> Cupid here, with arrow fleet
> Armed, from me receive; so learning,
> E'en when diamond, Cupid's yearning
> To prostrate him at thy feet.
> On this string in pearly whiteness
> Glisten tears for thine adorning,
> Fallen from the eyes of Morning,
> Seeing thee outshine her brightness.
> Emeralds this fair eagle moulding
> Make my hope's fresh colour known;
> For an eagle's eye alone
> Can endure *my* sun beholding.
> Here, thy turban to hold fast,
> Take this ruby clasp; for I
> May my girdle now untie
> In my fortune's port at last."

As if in sad irony on these hopeful words, the distant sound of a drum interrupts the congratulations of the friends, and comes to separate the newly-wedded pair. The enemy's squadrons are seen in the plain far below, led by the future hero of Lepanto, Don John of Austria, and the Morisco king has to take order for the defence. Undertaking the charge of one strong fort himself, he

bids Alvaro hasten to another,—Gavia; while it is thought best for Clara to return for a while with her father to the third, Galera, of which he has the command. Though striving to hope for a happy meeting in the hour of victory, the luckless bride and bridegroom part with the words that greeted their arrival:—

CLARA.

"Ah! my joys your lips lock fast!
Whose ye are ye need not tell.

ALVARO.

Ye are known for mine too well
By the short time that ye last.

CLARA.

Joys I grasped but to undo you,
Dying ere that ye were born.

ALVARO.

Rosebuds, gathered ere the morn,
Flowers plucked ere the spring could woo you."

Contrary to expectation, Galera is the first attacked. Twice Alvaro risks life and honour to carry off his lady. Once he fails through his servant's carelessness, which deprives him of his horse; the second time he reaches the town just as the Spaniards explode a mine and enter its walls through the breach. The flames rise above a scene of pillage and carnage. Women as well as men are put to the sword. The aged Malec falls in a vain attempt to defend the ramparts; while a distant cry for help from his daughter rings in his dying ear. Guided by the

same voice, Alvaro makes his way into the burning house, and rushes out of it with his beautiful bride in his arms. She is bleeding from a mortal wound. The soldier who took her jewels, not content with them, has taken her life also. Her death-dimmed eyes fail at first to recognise her husband, whom she bids, the stranger that she takes him for, seek out at Gavia with the news of her death, and with her last embrace.

ALVARO.

"That embrace which thou dost give me,
No! there is no need to carry
To thy spouse; for, since here ended
Are the days that called him happy,
Forth he comes himself to take it,—
For misfortune never tarries.

CLARA.

That voice, O my loved one, only
Can detain my life departing,
Make me happy in my death-pang.
Let me, let me, thee enclasping,
Die with thy dear arms around me." (*Dies.*)

Then arises the loud and long lamentation of the Morisco over his "early blighted rose; a marvel of beauty while she lived, but now no less a marvel for her terrible death." His wail resounds "over the strangest and most fearful tryst ever kept by lover, in which the lady lies bathed in her blood, and the nuptial couch is turned into a tomb;" and his agonised spirit finds some relief in a vow to follow the Spanish troops till he can avenge his bride on her murderer. "So," he ends, "shall the universe know that 'Love after death' can abide in an

Arab bosom; nor shall death himself be able to vaunt his power to separate two lovers such as we."

This vow, made in the lurid glare of the burning city, is fulfilled in the broad light of day. Alvaro visits the Christian camp, disguised as a common soldier; and is there taken for the umpire in a gambling dispute. The stake over which the Spaniards have been quarrelling is a diamond Cupid; readily recognised by Alvaro as one of his own nuptial presents. The owner, he is told, won it a few weeks ago at the sack of Galera. Chance gives him a good opportunity of ascertaining the facts from the soldier in question, whose name is Garces,—since (not as yet suspecting his fearful interest in the man) he draws his sword in his defence, finding him unequally attacked, and, as a brawler in camp, is put with him under arrest. Left alone together, Garces promises Alvaro that his captain, Mendoza, will soon release them both, since he himself stands high in his favour,—deservedly so, as he has laid the whole army under an obligation by discovering a cavern under the rock of Galera, which proved a mine ready made by which to blow up that fortress. "Would, though, I had never found it!" is the unexpected conclusion of his speech. "Why?" asks Alvaro. "Because," Garces rejoins, "fate has been against me from that date forward; wherefore I know not, unless it be for this, that, as I then slew a beauteous Morisca, whose charms were the very transcript of heaven, I perchance by so doing made heaven my foe." "Tell me how it all happened," says Alvaro; and Garces, nothing loath, tells his new friend of the capture of the town, and his own good luck in finding his way to the house of the governor.

"There each room I penetrated,[1]
Searched through every hall full swiftly,
Till I reached one tiny chamber,
Last retreat for hiding chosen
By the fairest Moorish maiden
That these eyes have ever looked on.
Oh, what well-skilled hand could paint her!
But we have no time for pictures.
Shamed at once and agitated
By my sight, as though the curtains
(Of her bed the screen transparent)
Had been ramparts of a fortress,
She in them to hide essayed her.—
But with tears your eyes are filling;
And your face is all forsaken
Of its colour.

ALVARO.

'Tis the memory
Of misfortunes that assailed me
Very like to these. . . . Continue.

GARCES.

In I rushed; rich jewels made her
Glitter so, she stood so splendid,
All bedecked with goodliest raiment,
That she looked as if a lover
And a bridal she awaited,—
Not made ready for her burial.
I, at sight of so much fairness,
Wished to save her life; if only
I might have her love in payment.
But, so soon as I adventured
By one snowy hand to take her,

[1] Assonants in *a*, *e*.

Straightway said she to me: 'Christian,
Since my death no fame can gain thee,
Since no woman's blood can brighten
Sword, but leaves instead a stain there,
Let these jewels quench thine eager
Thirst for wealth; this couch leave stainless,
One pure bosom's faith respecting,
To love's mysteries yet a stranger.'
But I grasped her.

ALVARO.

Stop this instant,
Listen, here, consider, stay thee.
Grasp her not.—My words are idle;
Empty fantasies amaze me.
But go on; how can it matter
Unto me what thou narratest?

GARCES.

She aloud for life and honour
Cried, beseeching some to aid her.
I, who heard advancing footsteps,
Seeing one hope dissipated,
Would not lose the other also;
Nor admit with me as sharers
Of her gems my fellow-soldiers.
All my love to vengeance changed then
(Since one passion quickly passes
To its opposite); enraged me
Then I know not what fell fury;
Moved by which (ah, now it shames me
To repeat it), I,—a diamond
Jewel and pearl-string to tear thence,
Heedless of the snowy heaven,
Azure-veined, that underlay them,—
Pierced her breast.

ALVARO (*stabbing him*).

And did thy dagger
With a stroke like this find way there?

GARCES (*falling*).

Woe is me.

ALVARO.

Die, die, foul murderer.

GARCES.

Thou? can hand of thine have slain me?

ALVARO.

Yes; because this vanished beauty,
Rose whose leaves thy hand defacèd,
Of my very life the soul was.
'Tis her husband's hand that slays thee."

The cries of the dying man bring Mendoza, Lope de Figueroa, and Don John of Austria, to the spot. Alvaro's tale excites their sympathy, and the plain-spoken Don Lope gives his opinion without the slightest hesitation, thus—

LOPE.

"Had he killed your lady?

ALVARO.

Yes.

LOPE.

Then you did right. (*To Don John.*) Let him go, my lord, for his offence deserves praise rather than punishment; for you yourself would kill the man who killed your lady-love: by God, I know you would, or you would not be Don John of Austria."

Of this play (which closes with the surrender, by the widowed Isabel, of the Moriscoes' last fortress) Sismondi has said that "it makes us better acquainted with the revolt of Granada than do the details of any of the historians." And no wonder, because they do not possess either the insight or the sympathy of the poet. To the ordinary Spanish historian the Moor was an alien in race and creed, at whose disasters he could rejoice with a safe conscience; to Calderon (the witness of the decay caused by the expulsion of the Moriscoes to his country), the Moor, if an erring brother, was a brother still, "united to him by the same spirit of chivalry, by the same punctilious honour, and by love of the same country: ancient wars and recent persecutions had not been able to extinguish in him the memory of the early bonds which united them."[1] Thus the spectator of this drama feels himself set entirely on the side of the vanquished—a remarkable thing surely, when we consider who its author was, and for what audience he wrote. For it is Calderon, the courtly and catholic poet *par excellence*, who, with wide tolerance and rare largeness of heart, having brought on the stage a princely hero of a crusade in Don John of Austria, does not hesitate to give the honours of the play to a despised Morisco; and to hold up as a model of knightly love and constancy after death, not the victor of Lepanto, but the vanquished of Galera.

In the "Love of Gomez Arias" Calderon takes a further step in favour of the proscribed race, by presenting to us in strong contrast the romantic generosity of a Moorish outlaw and the baseness of a Spanish cavalier. The ballad which rehearsed the disgraceful conduct of

[1] Sismondi.

Gomez is familiar to readers of Don Quixote; so that Calderon is not responsible for the invention of a story so discreditable to Spanish honour. The tale, whether true or false, commemorated by the ballad, refers to the first revolt of the Moors, provoked by the intolerance of Cardinal Ximenes, ten years after the capture of Granada. It is in that city, during a pause in the campaign, that Gomez Arias (a soldier of the Don Juan type) beguiles his leisure by making love to its governor's daughter, Beatrice. His suit prospers well, till he has to fly the city in consequence of a duel with a rival, Don Felix. His retreat is Cadiz; where he quickly seems to forget Beatrice for Dorothea, the fairest and noblest lady of the town. Such, as his discourse with Gines, his attendant, shows, is the constant practice of Gomez Arias; and he has an argument at once philosophical and ingenious by which he justifies it. Nature, he says, has constituted him a lover of perfection: now perfection is not to be found entire in any single woman, but various portions of it are presented, turn by turn, by different ladies;—what then so fit as that each in its turn should claim and receive his adoration? One of the perfections of poor Dorothea is (unhappily for herself) a simple and confiding disposition, which makes her only too easily fall a prey to her heartless admirer; who first prevails on her to elope with him, and then requites her trust by forsaking her, only three days later, in a ravine, while fast asleep. Cañeri, the bandit chieftain of a neighbouring Moorish fortress, is on the point of carrying the poor deserted lady off with him, when she is rescued by the Governor of Granada; who commits her to the charge of her rival, his daughter Beatrice. No student of Calderon

will marvel to find Gomez Arias hid in the governor's house at the very time of Dorothea's admission; but the use made of this familiar incident is an unexpected one. Dorothea, suddenly confronted by her enraged father (come from Cadiz to Granada to invoke the governor's assistance), shrieks with terror. Gomez, ignorant of her presence, rushes forth, as he thinks, to the assistance of Beatrice. The light has been, as usual, extinguished; and he acts, as he supposes, with his usual ingenuity, when, grasping the terrified lady's hand, he leads her forth outside the house and outside the city. The light of morning shows him his mistake. Beatrice is not with him. He avenges his disappointment on Dorothea; who, at first delighted to find the man, whom she fondly calls husband, alive, after she had bewailed him as slain by those Moors, from whom she herself escaped with such difficulty, is confounded to hear Gomez ask her: "By what bad chance is it that

> "Thee I find whom I abhor
> In her place whom I adore?"

In vain Gines asks his master to pity his victim; and bids him "consider that she is a woman, and that she weeps." Dorothea implores him at least to show some regard to his own honour, adding—

> "Ah! my lord, there is no need
> Thus to insult me; courtesy
> Should live on, though love should die.
> Give, at least, this scanty meed
> To repay my many sighs,
> Tears so many shed for you.

GOMEZ.

Woman who dost weep and woo,
Who art thou? what seek these cries?
Nought I owe thee.

DOROTHEA.

But things two,—
Life and honour."

Gomez loses patience, and, after denying this just claim with a brutal "You followed me to please yourself; what do I owe you for that?" adds these terrible words, "I left you before when you were asleep; to-day I shall leave you waking." "You shall kill me or take me with you," is Dorothea's rejoinder. "I shall do neither the one nor the other," answers Gomez; and, advancing towards the Moorish fort, Benamegl, which overlooks the pass up which their flight has been directed, he calls its garrison to a parley. Cañeri appears on the wall, and is at once asked by Gomez if he will buy a slave of him. Recognising the beautiful lady who, shortly before, so narrowly escaped his hands, the Moorish leader gladly assents; and goes to fetch great wealth in gold and jewels as her price. Then Dorothea makes a last effort to move her betrayer's flinty heart. "Monster, tiger, worse yet —man!" she says, "will not thunder-bolts strike thee for such a thought? Sell *me*,—a freeborn woman (though made thy slave by love)—me, thy lady, nay more, thy spouse? and to whom? May the sun refuse thee its light; air, earth, and water their gifts! Mayst thou die a traitor's death!—Ah! what said I? Alas! my lord, my love, my husband, I am thy slave, but a slave too faithful to be cast away. If I have displeased thee, kill

me, do not sell me. Let me die, and live happy in the sunlight, and may earth smile round thee as a garden!" Gomez remains silent. Dorothea tries appeals to his pride, proposes to retire into a convent, offers to further his suit with Beatrice, nay, even promises to become the slave of her favoured rival,—and all in vain. Equally in vain does she invoke memories of the past,—the ready credence which she gave to him, the high place she forsook for him, the home and honour which she lost for him, the noble father whose heart she wellnigh broke for his sake. Gomez still says nothing. And now Cañeri is seen hastening down the hill, and Dorothea pours forth her whole heart in this last passionate pleading:—

"O my lord! my sovereign master!
Earthly heaven, sole good for me![1]
To thy true self turn repenting,
And let such repentance, seen
In thee, change thy crime to merit.
O persist not, lest from thee
Sun and moon, and stars of heaven,
All withhold their light serene;
Men and beasts, the birds, the fishes,
All before thy coming flee;
Mountain, rock, and tree and forest,
Give no shelter in thy need;
Fire and earth, the air, the water,
To thee never comfort yield;
But, beholding act so hideous,
All should turn against thee grieved,
Seeing that, without relenting,
Thou these words so oft canst hear:

[1] Assonants, *e* only.

Knightly Gomez Arias,
Pity feel for me;
Leave me not a captive
In Benamegì."[1]

Gomez vouchsafes no single word of answer. Cañeri has by this time arrived with his treasures. He lays down the rubies and diamonds, and then turns to Dorothea, saying, "Christian, thou art mine once more." "A woman is making restitution to me of the money of which many women have robbed me," says Gomez, as he grasps the proffered wealth; "the slave is thine." The Moors seize the unhappy Dorothea, in spite of her utmost resistance. Her piteous entreaty for at least a farewell embrace is refused, and she is dragged away, exclaiming—

"Stars! whence my ill fate proceeds,
Twinkling lights that view mine anguish,
Heavens that suffer such ill deed!
Ye, high mountains that behold it,
Birds, whose songs my plaints repeat,
Winds, that frighted stop to listen,
Trees whose branches shake with fear
Hearkening to my mournful sobbing,
Help me in my woful need!
And since men refuse me pity,
Oh, be kind and pity me;
For they lead me captive
To Benamegì."

It was at this point of the action that a Spanish soldier, on guard at the Madrid theatre, rushed forward, sword in hand, on to the stage to rescue the noble

[1] These words are the refrain of the old ballad. Dorothea has pronounced them once already, and they are again repeated.

Spanish lady from slavery to the infidel. No better witness need be asked for to the vigour and pathos which Calderon has here put forth.

His villainous hero is not long in betaking himself once more to Granada. Finding Beatrice acquainted with his having carried away Dorothea from Cadiz, he boldly avows the fact; pretending that he only did so to spite his true lady love, of whom he was for the moment jealous. But he adds that he soon hated and left her; and that such was his horror at finding that he had carried her away by mistake a second time, that he has sold her to the Moor, and now lays her price before her rival's feet. After this almost inconceivable display of his baseness, he coolly asks—

"Are your doubts now satisfied?

BEATRICE.

Yes; and wisdom gained besides.
Since the ill I see at last
That to trap me ready lay,
Thine excuse I fling away,
But this wisdom I hold fast.
Slain by love, a pale corpse lies
That poor lady; and the sight
Brings thy traitorous heart to light—
Makes me loathe thy flatteries.
Stiff and cold before mine eyes
Thy disgraced love moves my heart,
And her warnings make me start;
For, though mute, those white lips say—
'Fly, or else behold one day
In thy state my counterpart.'
. . . . .
If thus full her piteous fate
Is of warnings gravely given,

When the thunder peals from heaven
Why should I the bolt await?
Since such spectre, hovering late
O'er love's ashes, said e'en now,
'I, by lover's treacherous vow,
Of mine all have been beguiled,—
I, an honoured father's child,
Once as prosperous as thou,'—
Must I not believe? And so
Take thy folly's punishment,
For who proves that thine intent
Is not, if with thee I go,
Soon to drown me in like woe?
While I stand before thee free,
From thy snare I haste to flee;
Lest those warning words should end
Thus, while I no hearing lend,—
'As I am, so thou shalt be.'" (*Exit.*)

This farewell is a final one. Beatrice, convinced of the imprudence of her own choice, submits to her father's will, and accepts the husband he has designed for her—thus defeating her wicked suitor's prediction on her departure:—

"No need yet for doubt and sorrow;
I, whatever she may say,
Will get speech with her to-day,
And may sell *her* too to-morrow."

The avenger of his misdeeds is approaching. The next scene shows us the entrance, with all befitting martial pomp, of Queen Isabella[1] into her beautiful

[1] It was, in truth, her husband, King Ferdinand, who suppressed the revolt in question; but Calderon has preferred his queen's more poetic figure, and placed her as a more suitable champion to defend his wronged heroine.

and well-loved conquest, Granada. She salutes the rivers that water its plain, the snow-crowned mountains that tower above it, as one come to protect them against relapsing into the infidel's hands. But the beat of drums, and the loud plaudits which follow the queen's harangue, are hushed when an aged nobleman steps forward and flings himself as a suppliant at her feet. It is Dorothea's father, Don Luis, come to ask for justice against Gomez, which Isabella, on hearing his sad story, readily grants; ordering a price to be set on the traitor's head, and a double reward if he can be taken alive. She next directs an instantaneous advance on Benamegl. Cañeri, meantime, has treated his captive well; respectfully awaiting her consent to change her religion and become his wife. Nothing, in fact, can be more clearly marked than the superiority in all chivalric feeling of the purchaser of Dorothea to her heartless seller. It comes out very strongly in a scene, near the end of the play, within the walls of Cañeri's fortress. There Dorothea's declaration that she would die a thousand times rather than renounce her faith, only calls forth regret, not indignation, from the brave Moor. Her profound sadness awakens his pity; and he is the first to impose silence on his musicians, when (being asked to divert her with a song) they begin their newest ballad,—

"Knightly Gomez Arias,
Pity feel for me;
Young and very lonely,
New to misery;"

and make Dorothea burst into tears, and exclaim, like Gretchen in "Faust," "Have they made ballads already of my story?" But the beat of drums is heard

outside; the music ceases, and Cañeri hastens forth to defend his fortress. He is mortally wounded in fight with Don Luis; and expires at the feet of Queen Isabella. Meantime Dorothea, who has armed the Christian captives and opened the gates to the queen, is restored by her to her father, and immediately after to her forfeited station and honour. For the proclamation has taken speedy effect, and the guilty Gomez, brought captive into Isabella's presence, is at once by her commanded to acknowledge Dorothea as his wife. He does so readily, with a prayer for her forgiveness of the past. This is immediately accorded,—and even her father stands prepared to accept, for the sake of what fools might call honour, this vilest of sons-in-law. No reader of "Measure for Measure" could envy Mariana the hand of Angelo; but bad and base as is Angelo, his baseness is not so irretrievable, his badness so irreclaimable, as is that of Gomez. Calderon, little scrupulous as he often shows himself in such matters,[1] felt it impossible to leave his lovely Dorothea in such evil hands; and so he makes his queen act here with more wise sternness than the Duke who pardons Angelo at his new-made wife's intercession. "You," she says, "Don Luis, have received satisfaction for the injured honour of your house; now comes my turn. Call the executioner; cut off this man's head forthwith, and expose it on the ramparts of the town where he sold his spouse to the infidel." Dorothea pleads in vain for her wicked bridegroom's life. "No door must be left open for the pardon of crimes like this," says the just Isabella; and so the play concludes.

[1] See his "Nothing like Silence."

It is this admirable piece of poetical justice at its end which, even more than its interesting story, its singularly pleasing heroine—so well contrasted, too, with the spirited Beatrice—its deep pathos, its generous acknowledgment of Moorish virtues, and its fine historical background, makes "La Niña de Gomez Arias" one of Calderon's best plays.

CHAPTER X.

THE *AUTOS* OF CALDERON.

THE Sacramental Act was the most national and characteristic effort of the Spanish drama during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Its form was that of a short sacred play, preceded by a long prologue spoken by several actors: its object, the glorification of the doctrine of transubstantiation; its time, the festival of Corpus Christi. The actors who were to perform in it followed the gorgeous procession, usual on that day, in their ornamental cars; and performed, after the religious ceremonies were over, in the open air, before the multitudes who crowded the great square of some vast city, or before the humbler concourse of rustics on some village green. Lope de Vega left the entertainment even more popular than he found it; and in his four hundred *autos* (only thirteen of which survive) laid down the lines on which Calderon was afterwards to plan and raise that majestic temple which German and Spaniard, northern and southern, Protestant and Romanist, have alike combined to praise for its vast and harmonious proportions, its inexhaustible riches of decoration, and its solemn and impressive grandeur of design. "He who first treads

within the magic circle of these poems," says Schack, "feels himself breathed on by a strange spirit, and beholds another heaven outspread over another earth; depths of dizzy thought open before him, enigmatical figures rise from the abyss, and the dark red flames of mysticism shine into the mysterious fountain from which all things flow. But the clouds disappear, and we see ourselves above the limits of the terrestrial, beyond the bounds of space and time; for we have been lifted up into the kingdom of the immeasurable and the eternal. . . . A gigantic cathedral of spiritual architecture receives us; on the altar, surrounded by ineffable light, the mystery of the Trinity is enthroned; a dazzling splendour of rays, which human sense can scarcely endure, spreads out and illuminates the mighty pillared vault with unspeakable glory; here all beings are lost in the contemplation of the Eternal, and look with astonished eyes on the unfathomable depth of divine love, while the whole creation joins together in one joyful chorus." To such competent (though it may be partial) judges, scholastic theology has seemed in Calderon's hands to lose its dryness, and allegory its frigidity. Lorinser (translator of these *autos* into German) claims for Calderon the merit of having given a "true, and not merely an apparent living existence to his allegorical personages;" while Eichendorff says very beautifully, after reminding us how absolute beauty can only reveal itself to us under earthly images, and how therefore all genuine poetry is, properly speaking, symbolical: "We feel that under the terrestrial veil lies silent and asleep the unfathomable song which is the voice of all things; but Calderon speaks the magic words, and the world begins

to sing." To these initiated listeners, the seventy-three *autos* which have come down to us are Calderon's surest title to immortality. They feel (to borrow the words of Schlegel, the greatest dramatic critic of Germany) that "it is on religious themes that the mind of Calderon is most distinctly expressed. Love he paints merely in its most general features; he but speaks its technical poetical language. Religion is his peculiar love, the heart of his heart. For religion alone he excites the most overpowering emotions, which penetrate into the inmost recesses of the soul; and by this deep religious enthusiasm exhibits the universe, as it were, under an allegorical representation in the purple flames of love."

Now the dramas which have excited this warm and sympathetic admiration, presuppose on the part of their audience a great knowledge of Scripture and of its received mystic interpretation, and an exact acquaintance with the doctrines of their Church, as fixed by the Council of Trent. They require for their enjoyment a readiness to penetrate the allegoric meaning of each character which they present. Above all things, they need a strong and unquestioning belief in the great truths they exhibit in concrete form; for such a belief can alone enable the beholder to shudder at their representation of man's Fall, and to rejoice with thrilling ecstasy as they figure to him man's Redemption. In fact, they imparted to the pious citizen of Madrid or Toledo the same delight which the 'Pilgrim's Progress' still sheds round the English fireside. The rationalist acknowledges them, and it, to be works of genius, and derives pleasure from its contemplation; but his satisfaction only arises from the way in which their theme

is handled, and not from the theme itself. But the Christian can enjoy both — an enjoyment from which (especially in some of Calderon's inferior *autos*) superstitions alien to the faith which owns Nicene, not Tridentine, authority must detract something; but which in the grandest *autos* finds little to disturb it.

The subject of the *auto* being essentially always the same, it amazes the mind to see with what ingenuity the great Spanish dramatists have succeeded in approaching it from the most various sides. It is here that Calderon especially has displayed his great fertility of invention. Some of his *autos* are serious parodies of his own secular drama, as "Life's a Dream" and "The Painter of his own Dishonour;" in which last the Divine artist who appears disguised in our flesh to behold and repair His own ruined work is very nobly set forth. We have already said something of another division,—those *autos* which have classical titles; such as "The true God Pan," or "Orpheus, the Vanquisher of Hades." There is a third class which contains some of Calderon's best, and also many of his worst, *autos*—namely, that formed of dramas suggested by contemporary events. One of these celebrates Queen Christina of Sweden's reconciliation with the Romish Church; another the opening of a hospital at Madrid; two more, a hunting-party of Philip the Fourth's, and the enlargement and adornment of his palace of the Retiro; again, one is in honour of his second marriage. The nearest analogy to such dramas, viewed as religious lessons, in our own day, will be found in well-intended tracts designed to draw spiritual teaching from public events; such as the Great Exhibition or the marriage of the Prince of Wales. It need

not be said that such methods of popular instruction sometimes (most undesignedly) provoke ludicrous ideas; and it is to this class of Spanish sacred dramas that the strictures of some foreign critics seem most applicable.

A fourth division of Calderon's *autos* is that founded on historical events, as the conversion of Constantine, the life of St Ferdinand, and the defence of Almudena. A fifth, and much more numerous, set of *autos* are derived from the Bible. In them the great typical figures of the Old Testament are set forth to foreshadow our Divine Lord; and its holy women, His Virgin Mother. In them His parables are enacted by suitable personages; and His miracles are so represented as to bring forth all manner of symbolic meanings.

Two *autos* of Calderon form a class by themselves, since they have no human actors. They are "The Matrimonial Dispute" (of which more anon), and "Humility crowned," taken from Jotham's fable of the trees. "In this play," says Pedroso, "those who saw two actors in their strange disguise of boughs and foliage, were obliged to project themselves into the following series of interpretations: these men represent the thorn and the laurel, shrubs that symbolise Judaism and Paganism, which are themselves allegorical figures of the two nations that assisted at the passion of Christ." All the characters employed are of the same description; and yet both these dramatised fables, especially the former, are interesting.

The seventh and last section of these *autos* is that formed by ethical allegories, such as "There is no Fortune but God," and "The great Theatre of the World." It is in *autos* like these that Calderon, without ceasing to be a great poet, stands forth as a great moral teacher;

preaching sermons of which Massillon might have been proud,—as in his mystic *autos* we seem to hear once more the long silent voice of the great preacher, Luis de Granada. We shall not offer our readers specimens of each of these classes, limited space warning us to confine ourselves to the acknowledged masterpieces.

One of these, in Lorinser's opinion, is a drama of our fifth class, "Belshazzar's Feast;" which yet was one of Calderon's earliest *autos*, having been probably composed about 1638. In it Belshazzar is the true historical personage so named in the Book of Daniel; but he is likewise, from his profanation of the vessels of the temple, the type of the unworthy communicant, whose doom his fate foreshadows. Similarly, Daniel is a real prophet in this *auto;* but (agreeably to the meaning of his Hebrew name) he also represents the judgment of God, and has therefore under his control the allegoric form of Death—who (as Lorinser remarks) is almost the chief actor in the piece. The rival sultanas, *Idolatry* and *Vanity*, who beguile the unhappy king to his ruin, though purely allegoric personages, are represented with all the traits of Eastern beauties; while the buffoon of the piece (for even *autos* have their buffoons) is man's Thought, which, being here the thought of Belshazzar, is foolishness.

The pride, which is hurrying the monarch to his destruction, displays itself by the determination which he expresses, to rebuild the Tower of Babel; introduced by a narrative of its first construction and of the Deluge which preceded it, much of which is in a singularly sublime strain of poetry. Daniel's warnings to him are unheeded; and the seer is left alone, sadly asking who can be found to defend God's injured honour, when a voice

replies, "I will," and Death enters. The prophet himself starts terrified, and asks what this awful shape, never seen by him before, can be. The answer is, "The child of envy and of sin, but yet the executioner of God's judgments, and therefore not terrible to His servants"—

> "Yet 'tis no marvel thou shouldst tremble, no,
> E'en wert thou God Himself, beholding me;
> Since, when of the fair Rose of Jericho
> 'Mid lilies the Carnation's Birth shall be,
> The human part of very God shall know
> Fear at my sight; the stars their light shall see
> Bedimmed, the moon her face, his orb the sun,
> When by my hand that Captive great is won.
> . . . . . .
> The proudest tower that the despairing winds
> Assail no more, but flatteringly caress,
> The wall so safe that the death-engine finds
> No way within its guarded close to press,
> My hand resistless all to powder grinds,
> My foot treads down to dust and lowliness:
> And if, I say, 'tis thus with wall and tower,
> How shall the lowly hut withstand my power?
>
> Beauty and genius, force of human might,
> Resist in vain when once my voice is heard;
> All living men, soon as they saw the light,
> Passed unto me to die one day their word.
> . . . . . .
> I will burn Nimrod's fields; drive terror-stirred
> Proud Babel's nations into speedy flight.
> . . . . . .
> I will bring over Shinar's plains a flood,
> Dyeing them red in King Belshazzar's blood."

Commanded to stay the execution, and to warn so that, if possible, Belshazzar may repent and be saved, Death goes against his will on this merciful errand; con-

straining the yet more unwilling Thought to be his companion. The heedless king starts at the ghastly vision, which remains scarcely noticed by the two gay queens. "Who art thou, voiceless, bodiless phantom?" asks Belshazzar; "how camest thou in hither?"

DEATH.

"If his light the bright sun throws
On the earth's face, I am shadow;
If he as the world's life glows,
I am the world's death; and thus
I can go where'er he goes,
Since to lights and shadows space
Equally possession owes."—(M.)

"What wouldst thou?" gasps out the king. "I am a creditor of thine," is the answer—"here is the memorandum of the debt;" and leaving in his hand a paper, which represents the remembrance of death long lost by Belshazzar, the dread visitant departs. For a short time the thoughtless youth pores over it with terror; then he allows Vanity to snatch it from his hand, and to lull him to sleep with her song. While he slumbers, Death steals in once more; and, marvelling to see his own image, sleep, go on warning men without being heeded by any, says—

"Man for rest to slumber flies,
Ah, great God! heed never taking
How, by sleeping and by waking,
He each day is born and dies;
How a living corpse he lies
Daily, and surrendereth
Up his life to a brief death,
Never what his rest is heeding;
How a lesson Death stands reading
Thus to all who draw life's breath."

His arm (raised to smite the sleeper) is once more arrested by Daniel. Little, however, does Belshazzar profit by the respite, or by the warning conveyed to him in a vision. Idolatry spreads for him the fatal table, the sacred vessels are profaned there, and Death enters in disguise among the attendants, to present to him the cup which is the seal of his transgressions. So soon as the king has quaffed it to an idol's praise, a loud thunder-clap is heard, the three mystic words of condemnation are revealed in fire and interpreted by Daniel; and now at last Death is seen advancing, and carries off his unresisting prey.

This is the finest of the *autos* on Old Testament subjects. Those which are taken from the New Testament tread on yet holier ground, and (though most reverent in intention) may shock, at least at first sight, by their boldness. In them the Redeemer of mankind is presented, either in His own person casting the devil out of his ancient possession, Man, and bidding human nature (figured by the Cripple at Bethesda's pool) arise and walk, or else disguised as the prominent figure in one of His own parables. One of these *autos* shows Him as the sower of the good seed; another as the Samaritan coming to aid the traveller whom three bandits (the World, the Flesh, and the Devil) have wounded and left for dead; a third displays His entrance into the Vineyard, amid the transitory hosannas of the wicked husbandmen, whence He is to be cast out by them and slain.

One of the finest of these is taken from the parable of the Marriage of the King's Son, and bears the name of "The Called and the Chosen." In it (as in some degree always in these *autos*) events are not conceived of chrono-

logically, but grouped together as concrete manifestations of spiritual truth; and the Incarnation is seen affecting the centuries which went before it, as well as all the ages that are to come.

At its opening two faithful servants of the great King implore Him to give heed to the prayers of His banished subjects. The two petitioners are Isaiah and Daniel; their prayer is, that the great palace doors may open, and from its hidden recesses send forth their promised Ruler, the King's Son. Sad voices chant from within—

"Mercy to us, O Lord,
Thy banished, now afford;
By our long tears be won,
And send us now Thy Son!
Thy mercy show us, Lord!"

The prayer is heard. The instant coming of the Prince with His royal bride, the Church, is proclaimed; and they are seen first standing on the deck of a mystic ship, then landing, while sweet voices sing—

"Ship, by which to earth is given
Pearl whose worth is infinite;
Chariot, that dost earth unite
(Though so far apart) with heaven,—
Come to land, here stay thy flight,
Here thy mystery hid release;
Since, to make the war to cease,
'Twixt our king and us thou fliest.

CHORUS.

Glory to God be in the highest,
And to man on earth be peace!"

While the prophets are inviting the kings of the earth to the great marriage-feast, the royal Bridegroom and

His spouse discourse in strains borrowed from the Song of Songs:—

THE PRINCE.

"Loved spouse divine, whose light
Makes other light to turn to dimmest shade,
Yea, day itself to night,
So that the sun, by thee a beggar made,
Might of thy beauty's flower
Seek radiance fair with which his stars to dower!

THE SPOUSE.

Lover and lord in one,
Whose grace for chill December's frost can weave
The pomps of April's sun,
Bidding him roses at thine hand receive,
Which he thy feet before
Lays, where (though cold his breath) they bloom the more!

THE PRINCE.

Never can roe, with wound
Whence with the blood the life begins to flow,
Pursue the murmuring sound
Of crystal fountains eager, as I go
To seek thy tenderness,
Feeling of love's keen dart the sweet distress.

THE SPOUSE.

The lamb, than snow more white,
Enamoured of its tender shepherd's care,
Runs not o'er sward so light,
To reach his arms, and rest all panting there,
As I, by love oppressed,
Fly swifter than the wind to gain thy breast."[1]

[1] "Llamados y Escogidos."

Then Truth appears with the sad tidings of her rejected mission and the murder of the prophets. The King, upon this, sends forth to invite the poor, in place of the great ones of the earth. The voice cries in the wilderness, the twelve apostles proclaim the summons. Paganism repents, and (following the guidance of a star) takes his place at the banquet. Only the Synagogue refuses, — sending Falsehood, disguised, to steal the heavenly food for her. But this Judas is detected by his want of the wedding-garment, and expelled from the sacred feast at which the Church receives the troth-plight of her Lord; about to go forth from thence to His glorious triumph through suffering.

These instances of Calderon's symbolic treatment of Scripture will show his clear insight into its inexhaustible fulness of meaning, and his belief in its infinite variety of applications to man's need and man's sin, however variously manifested.

That sin and its attendant misery had deeply touched our poet's heart. Several of his finest *autos* take for their theme its origin in the fall of Adam; and are each a miniature 'Paradise Lost.'

In one of these, "The Poison and its Antidote," Human Nature appears a sovereign princess, mighty in her original innocence, to receive the gifts and homage of her vassals, the Four Seasons:—

WINTER.

"If, by heat of noon-tide burning,
Thee, my queen, I, tired, behold,
Here is water, clear and cold,
Its fierce flame to coolness turning.

SPRING.

Of my flowers that fairest are
I have twined this wreath for thee;
Place them on thy brow, to be
Flowers no more, but each a star.

SUMMER.

I have plucked these ears of wheat
To bestow on thee, who art
The true Ceres of my heart.

AUTUMN.

I these fruits before thy feet
Lay, rejoice thou in their beauty,
Of their riches freely eat.

DEATH.

I have found occasion meet,
Vassal, too, to pay my duty."

He presents the fatal apple. Vainly the attendant, Innocence, warns the Princess not to eat of it. Her mistress tastes it, and then, maddened by its deadly poison, turns to the Seasons who are dancing around her, and bids their song cease :—

PRINCESS.

"Cease, sweet accents! cease to sing,
Let your voices sound no more,
Though they gently chained before
Winds that hearkened wondering.
Wake no more on sounding string
Notes harmonious; but in guise
Other (ah, what pains! what sighs!)
In song's stead, now celebrate,
With sad tears, with mournful state,
Of my death the obsequies.
. . . . . .

WINTER.

Calm thee: what affrights thee so?

PRINCESS.

That thou art not, as of old,
My true vassal, winter cold;
Pass, nor freeze me with thy snow.

SPRING.

All such fears for baseless know;
Robe thee with thy charms divine,
Let the pink, the rose combine,
Once again to crown thee.

PRINCESS.

Nay;
Pass by quickly, spring-tide gay,—
Thorns lurk in those flowers of thine.

SUMMER.

Whence arise these terrors chill?

PRINCESS.

From beholding thee too nigh,
Burning summer; hasten by,
Lest thy fierce rays scorch and kill.

AUTUMN.

If December, August, still
Even May, by gifts offend,
Dry thine eyes and own a friend
In me.

PRINCESS.

Deadly is thy sight;
Pass, dread autumn, with swift flight,
For to death thy sweet fruits tend.

INNOCENCE.

All the seasons while they last
Cause her woe and weariness;
What in them was soft caress
Now is changed to harmful blast.
All of them to hasten past
With their gifts she asks, not knowing
That thus short her life is growing;
That to-morrow she must moan
For a yesterday then gone,
Now to-day unheeded going.

PRINCESS.

Beauteous sun! that so much light
Didst but yesterday bestow,
Why to-day thy brilliant glow
Dost thou hide in pale, sad night?
Thou, night's torch, too, quivering white,
Moon, inconstant now I see;
For thy radiance lighted me
Yesterday with crescent face;
But thy wane comes on apace
Ere thy brightness full could be.
Flowers that yestreen flourished gay,
White and purple, to surprise
As with sparkling flames mine eyes,
Why are thorns your gifts to-day?
Beasts, that yesterday would pay
Thousand courtesies unto me,
Standing still with love to view me—
All your wrathful threats suspending,
Flattering on my steps attending,
Why now seek ye to undo me?
Birds, that both at eve and morn
Yesterday sweet music gave,
Singing cheerful songs or grave,
Whence these boding notes forlorn?"[1]

[1] "El Veneno y la Tricca."

Here the pathos is deep. The Princess appears to the beholder as a real person. He shudders at the treachery of which she is the object; he compassionates the anguish with which she sees all nature turning against her; he longs for the approach of the Great Physician who is to bring the remedy, and rejoices when the Stranger from the far country comes with the healing waters and the heavenly food which effect the cure. These sorrows are, after all, my own,—this fable is told of me, is the deeper reflection meant to follow; but at first his whole attention is absorbed by the grief so well represented.

In the "Poison and its Antidote," the Four Seasons are the pitying and sympathising friends of Man, little as their blandishments can avail to divert his deep-seated sorrow. In "Man's Provisions," they assume at first a sterner aspect. Adam, expelled from Paradise, comes to beg food from them, and each replies that they are now forbidden to give him anything. He must earn what he needs by his labour. Yet from each he hears, besides, a hopeful prophecy. Spring looks forward to the Annunciation, which is to glorify March with the fairest of her flowers; and, while handing to Adam the spade which he is to toil with, sings—

> "Ah! when shall this grove grow bright,
> Seeing, in its smiling bower,
> All at once unite
> Red carnation's glowing flower
> And the lily's white?"

An angelic voice responds, and Gabriel appears, bearing the lily, to chant—

"Hail, thou sacred garden-close,
Which with beauteous, radiant spring,
One day shalt dispose
Jasmine flow'rets forth to bring,
Purpled like the rose!"

Adam afterwards prefers his petition to Summer. He, like his sister Spring, can bestow no free gift upon him; so he lends him a sickle with which to reap, and bids him hope for golden grain, when a morning star shall shine to make June resplendent. Voices from within are heard, which join Summer in singing—

"Morning star! hail dawn's bright gem,
Come our tide of woe and pains
Now, at last, to stem!
Ripen 'neath his light your grains,
Fields of Bethlehem!"

St John the Baptist appears in answer to this invitation, chanting—

"Mortals! joy my face to see,
For the dawn cannot be far
(Herald of the sun to be)
When the morning star
Bids the darkness flee.
Since to aid thee now I shine,
To prepare His way
Sent, with gleaming ray—
Life, soul, being, all be thine,
At His coming feet to lay."

In like manner Autumn, with his reaping-hook, points to the cluster of rich grapes which a September sun shall yet ripen for Adam's comfort on the birthday of the Virgin. Then Winter appears as an aged Shepherd to give him a crook, saying, as he enters—

"Since now shrinks the flock
From the bitter cold,
Come, day long foretold!
When the sun each plain and rock
Shall with joy behold.
. . . . . .

ADAM.

What fair splendours of the morn,
Winter, in a night of thine
Canst thou promise me shall shine?

WINTER.

Those which out of darkness born,
Come to glad the world with beams,
When the Sun[1] with purest light
Shows His face at mid of night,
And the star[2] at noon-tide gleams.

ADAM.

When shall comfort such have birth?

WINTER.

When thou creatures fair descriest,
Singing, Glory in the highest
Unto God, and peace on earth."[3]

It is only one step beyond symbolic representations like the foregoing, to dispense with human personages altogether. Calderon takes it in his "Matrimonial Dispute," a finely-conceived *auto* in the region of pure fable; which, as it was left unfinished by its author, we may imagine to have furnished the occupation of some of the latest weeks of his life. In it the ill-matched couple are

[1] Christ. [2] The star of the wise men.
[3] "Los Alimentos del Hombre."

the Body and the Soul of man—the offspring of their union, his Life; their friends, Understanding and Memory; their attendants, the Will and the five Senses; their foes, Sin and Death.

The *auto* begins by displaying the Body, with its five Senses at its feet; slumbering, but stirred by a presage of life. A throne awaits its coming spouse, the future ruler of the senses; and, resplendent with beauty, the Soul comes down from heaven to fill it. But she comes weeping at her banishment from her native country, and crying—

> "Beauteous land where I was born,
> Force from thee to earth now sends me;
> But, where'er I go, attends me
> Light that hailed my life's first morn,
> Changeless, though I roam forlorn.
> Me for endless life God wrought,
> Though He made me out of nought.
> Me, to spouse who waits me here,
> I protest 'tis force has brought.
> I protest that, prisonèd,
> While I in the body lie,
> I, to my true home to fly,
> Wings each hour shall long to spread."

As the Soul draws near to the Body, she falls into the arms of Sin; as, in like manner, does the Body (wakened by her approach) into those of Death. With such ominous auspices they join hands. Life, with his lighted torch, appears as the fruit of their union.

But the ill-assorted pair cannot long agree. The Body despises the sacramental food which is the Soul's supreme joy; and wastes her dowry of virtues and graces. The

Soul threatens to get her original protest against their union prosecuted to a divorce; but the Body disbelieves and disregards her warning, listening instead to Sin's siren voice, who is heard singing—

"Man, while yet thy star shines bright,
Let death's thought away be thrown;
For thy life is life alone
While as yet its joys delight.

BODY.

True: nor is my heart afraid,
Thinking life is but a flower
Budding in the morning hour,
Vanishing by evening's shade.
No; since brief our term is made,
Let this short life joy supply,
Ere from out our hand it fly.
Let us each desire obey,
Let us eat and drink to-day,
For to-morrow we must die.

MEMORY.

Man, awake! nor careless fall
Thus from thought; instead, take heed,
For death is not death indeed
Till by it man loses all."

The Body, implored by the Soul to listen to this last counsellor, hesitates; but finally decides for the pagan *carpe diem*, and Pleasure is proclaimed his conqueror. "Not mine," cries the justly indignant Soul; and proceeds to demand of the supreme judge her separation from her unworthy spouse. She fortifies her demand by an appeal to those prophets and to those doctors of the

Church who have called the body a prison, and implored deliverance from it. Life grows faint at her voice. The Body, seeing this, trembles, and promises amendment if the Soul will only recall her petition. Too late: the judge has received it, and is already proceeding to give his award; and scarcely has the Body had time to lodge his plea for a separation—at the worst temporary—when Death, torch in hand, comes in to notify the sentence. Then (like a dramatic version of Jeremy Taylor's description of death's approach) Life's flame burns dim, and the senses begin to fail, as the decree is read which sequestrates the Soul from the Body during the process of the suit. The Body has just had time to make its last confession when the torch is extinguished, Life vanishes, and the Body remains Death's prisoner in the dark caverns of the earth. Meantime the Soul, departing with her attendants, Will, Memory, and Understanding, has been restored (after brief purgatorial suffering) to her throne above, where the great Judge bids her await, at His second advent, a reunion, under better auspices, with her ancient spouse; whose voice meantime ascends from his prison-house with words like those which of old sounded amid the hills of Edom:—

"Here, my last great change expecting,
I, O Lord, in hope remain;
Trusting, on that day tremendous,
When this marriage-suit again
Thou, revising, shalt give sentence,
My lost consort to regain
At Thine hands, oh great Decreer,
Then to all of joy or pain!"[1]

[1] "El Pleyto Matrimonial."

This *auto*, no doubt, is here and there as an allegory imperfect: for it attributes to the Body the guilt of actions for which, after all, the Soul must have been responsible. But the power with which things are in it transformed into persons is marvellous: since we listen to the Soul's complaints of her wrongs and her degradation as if we were hearing the sorrow of some lofty tragic heroine. Nor can its picture of the consternation of all man's powers at the approach of "the last summoner" easily be surpassed.

CHAPTER XI.

HIS ETHICAL *AUTOS.*

WE now come to our last division of Calderon's *autos*—those which describe man's daily life as seen by an angel's eye. The deep moral lesson which one of them—"There is no Fortune but God"—is intended to teach, is conveyed in a most ingenious manner. It is opened by the Demon; who bids Malice delude men into forgetting God's continual overruling providence by teaching them to ascribe all events to an imaginary deity called Fortune. The designed victims of this imposture are seen slumbering as they await the call to life. Distributive Justice appears, to shake with her wand the branches of the great Tree of Life under which they sleep; on which hang the various ensigns of the condition assigned to each. "Awake to life!" she cries, "mortals, awake! to receive each the state allotted to you by God; thank Him for His gifts, but without exultation or sadness,—for, till he dies, no man is truly either happy or unhappy."

"In those stations I ordain
You shall all men equal see;
Since no station bad can be
If man well its part sustain.

Whether full of joy or pain,
Seek no other lot to take;
All men equal entrance make,
Exit like, in birth and death.
Mortals! wake to draw life's breath!
Unto life awake! awake!"

As the branches are shaken, a crown and sceptre fall from them on one destined to be King; and he starts up, asking—

"What is this that falls on me?
Weight that nowise little seems
Has awakened me from dreams
That I dreamed half wakingly.
Can it crown and sceptre be?
Mine was birth in happy hour;
For it sets within my power,
Toiling not, so great a thing.
What to be am I born?

DEMON.

King!

THE KING.

Who willed that?

MALICE.

'Tis Fortune's dower."

She tells the like lie to the man for whom falls the labourer's mattock; to the Beauty, so appointed by the mirror; to the Soldier, at whose feet drops the sword; to the Student, provided with a book; and to the Beggar, who has nothing given him but a staff. All believe the falsehood. All ascribe the gifts of God to Fortune, and are on the point of setting off to follow her, when the

student sees a cross fall from the tree, and shows it to the rest.

STUDENT.

"Wait; one gift amongst us thrown,
As for all, lies as it fell;
And no sign appears to tell
Which should have it for his own.

ALL.

What gift is it? make it known.

STUDENT.

'Tis a Cross, if right I see.

KING.

Then it was not meant for me,
Since for empire I was born,
Not to suffer pain or scorn.

BEAUTY.

Mine that Cross can never be,
Since my beauty to maintain
And enjoy, by fears unchilled,
Is for me what Fortune willed.

LABOURER.

I, too, say, 'Not mine;' my pain,
Sweat and toil oft spent in vain,
Are a Cross enough to bear.

BEGGAR.

Sorrow and the anxious care
Caused by poverty, my lot,
Other source of woe need not:
Hunger, thirst, that hourly wear,—
If nought else, to beg each day,—
Make for me sufficient Cross.

SOLDIER.

Born to risk of life the loss,
I need seek none.

STUDENT.

To essay
Study's steep and toilsome way,
As I do, is cross enow.

ALL.

Then, if all who live must bow
'Neath a cross from birth their own,
Whom to load was this one thrown?"

Justice enters and answers the question. The cross is offered to all—to be forced on none—and will prove a blessing to those who willingly take it up.

"To his lot let each man add it;
Once by this great staff supported,[1]
He shall see that, with like sweetness,
It can prop the saddest mourner,
And uphold the noblest victor.
Come, then, start not back in horror
At the red enamels, tinging
Where one line the other crosses,
For on no man weighs this burden
Heavier than can bear his shoulder.
. . . . . .
Therefore come, haste quickly hither,
Thou of men the earthly sovereign;
Join this stem of mystic beauty
To the laurel-bough that crowns thee.
. . . . . .

[1] Assonants in *o*, *e*.

Beauty, thou, ere age come blasting
With sere wind thy garden's flow'rets,
Hide thee 'neath this tree's safe shelter
From the breath of the devourer."

"Time for that when I am old," replies the Beauty; "let me now enjoy the gifts of my mistress, Fortune." "My business at present lies with the Student and with the Soldier," answers the King, "and my pleasure in adoring the Beauty. I know nothing of this deity on whose behalf you claim me; I owe all to Fortune." Sword and Gown make each a like answer. The Labourer, and the Beggar even, prefer to spend their time in complaining of their bad fortune, to praying heaven to make them happier. And thus all go on pursuing Evil and refusing Good,—for, in a scuffle, these two have exchanged cloaks, and few are wise enough to detect evil under the specious appearance of good, or not to shun good when it draws near to them disguised as evil. Presently the Beauty is seen, receiving the King's homage, seated in a garden among blossoms fair as herself. The Labourer bears fruit and flowers to present to her; the Soldier enters with sound of drum to give his master crowns to lay at her feet. As he does so, he praises Fortune as the author of his victories. "Right," says the King; "let us constitute this garden her temple, and offer our thanks to that mighty goddess." Dance and song are begun in Fortune's honour; and continued till a startling accident puts an end to them. The Beauty suddenly disappears from view. She has fallen into a dark pit; which the King and his attendants try vainly to fathom with the insignia of their stations. From its depth rises a hideous skeleton, grasped by which the King sees his sceptre, and the

general his truncheon. Then begins a touching lament over the vanished Beauty and her perished charms.

THE KING.

"In such grief and such distress
How am I the tale to tell,
That 'twas here the bright day fell,
Now dark night from hence doth press?
She, whose perfect loveliness
My vain heart did so adore,
Hideous now, is dust, nought more:
Who so foolish, as to know
This, and still to beauty bow—
Still kneel down king's throne before!

LABOURER.

That green tree, whose flowery crown
Lent us shade through many Mays,
That fair verdure that sent rays,
Bright as flamelets darting down,
Lightless, lifeless, has turned brown,
And, affrighted and dismayed,
We must own it useless shade:—
Yet, who loves, nor thinks it meet
Both to warm him in this heat,
And 'neath boughs like these be laid?

BEGGAR.

That rich, beauteous vase of gold,
That, through worth of rarest price,
High-born spirit could suffice
In its trusty charge to hold—
Now has lost its goodness old.
Now the golden vase contains

Poison that its beauty stains :—
Who so mad as to desire
With the poison to acquire
All that treasure for his pains ?

SOLDIER.

Now that life, whose flowery pride
By the world was idolized,
Smoke, dust, wind, as nought is prized,
Dimmed its light, its verdure dried ;
As his very faintest sighed
Death upon it, turned it straight
Into ashes ; woeful fate !—
How forget that we must die
Then ? still prize this life, nor nigh
Trembling see stern death to wait ?"[1]

By this time Evil has lost the disguise in which he passed for Good. The King sees with terror the mistake in which his life has been spent, and wishes to change places with a private soldier—with the Labourer, nay, even with the Beggar—so that he may have a lighter account to give in at the last. But each refuses: each sees that his own account will be heavy enough, and that the less he has to lose by death the less bitter will death be to him. The despised Cross is now seen as man's only refuge; and all confess that, since no station in life can be evil to a good, or good to an evil, man, so the ruler of life and the assigner of its several stations is not Fortune, but God.

Another allegoric *auto* is "The Sacred Year of Rome," composed in honour of the jubilee of 1650. It is the Spanish 'Pilgrim's Progress.' Man, attended by Free-

[1] "No hay Fortuna que Dios."

will, is seen at its outset surveying two paths — one flowery and inviting, the other made forbidding by thorns; and is perplexed to know on which road to walk through the brief day of his pilgrimage.

A voice recalls him from the broad, to the narrow, way. At its entrance flows the fount of living waters; and by its side stands the baptiser, who discloses himself as Heavenly Love, informs the traveller (till now ignorant of his high destiny) that he was born to serve God here, and to enjoy Him hereafter, and invites him to set out at once on the pilgrimage to the New Jerusalem; offering to him as his companions himself and his nine attendant Virtues. Man accepts the offer, and the Virtues hasten to his side, and equip him for his journey.

Fear invests him with sackcloth, Chastity binds on his girdle, Obedience gives him a covering for his head, Pardon a staff, and Truth a passport. Then the travellers set out, singing as they go—

"Spirit of Holiness,
Guard! Thou, too, Son of God!
Father! we ask of Thee
Bread, pilgrims' life-support,
Food which Thine angels eat
To us this day give, Lord!
. . . . .
Thou, of the angels' bread,
Let Thy grace save us now;
Us who, poor pilgrims weak,
Through these rough valleys go—
Valleys of grief and tears—
Thy face at least to know.
Thou of the angels' bread,
Let Thy grace save us, Lord!"

Thus the journey is well begun; but the World, the Flesh, and the Devil conspire to interrupt it. The World raises a gorgeous palace by the road-side, and, from its gilded turret, the Flesh holds out a golden cup to refresh the traveller in his weariness. The Virtues detect their foe, and implore Man to refuse it. But the Siren's charms overpower their voice, gain over Free-will, and draw Man to her side. He prepares to enter the World's house in search of his promised happiness; and hopes to take his travelling companions (all but Chastity) along with him. But this cannot be. "He that offends in one point is guilty of all." The Virtues link hands and depart: Fear and Love, as first to come, so last to go. "I shall soon overtake you," says the imprudent pilgrim. "You may not be able," is the reply. "Surely, if I can lose you I can find you." "Ah! no," is the answer. "Man of himself can lose God, but never can he find Him again, unless God Himself assists him."

Forsaken by all the Virtues, Man hastens to test the stability of the World's promises. He sees the light of dying day burning dim on the tower's glittering pinnacles; and feels that he must lose no time in tasting the pleasures which he has paid so great a price for.

MAN.

"Hear me, 'mid thy deathless splendours,
Dweller in this stately hall!

FLESH.

At my threshold who doth call?

MAN.

'Tis a pilgrim. Thou didst say,
'Come;' thy summons I obey,
In thy light celestial,
Glories of the world to find.

FLESH.

The world's glories!

MAN.

Even so.

FLESH.

These be they, then; thus they go,
Passing swifter than the wind.
(*The tower vanishes in flames.*)

MAN.

Portent, like to which in kind
Comes no second to appal,
Strong my reason to enthral!

FREEWILL.

Ah! my Lord, what now and where
Is that lofty building fair?

MAN.

Winds away have carried all.

FREEWILL.

All it offered, then, thy sight
Mocked, with longing vain to fill.

MAN.

Nor could I content my will,
But through one brief moment's flight;
Worldly glories then delight
Not one instant, ceaseless wasting.

LUCIFER *(from within)*.

Pilgrim ! traveller wrong way hasting !
In my fate behold thine own.
I, for one brief hour alone,
Lost the glory everlasting.

FREEWILL.

In the mount is left us nought
But a cavern's gloomy shade.

MAN.

Since, when all the rest did fade,
Day to nothing, too, was brought,
Let night's lodging there be sought.

(As Man prepares to enter the cavern, the World comes out of it.)

MAN.

Who art thou ?

WORLD.

The World am I.

MAN.

Was not thine that beauteous dome ?

WORLD.

Yes.

MAN.

Then what has it become ?

WORLD.

'Twas given to the winds, thereby
To elude thy tenancy.

MAN.

Yet thy promise what?

WORLD.

I know,
'Twas to lodge thee.

MAN.

That word, so
Trusted by my heart when told,
Why not keep?

WORLD.

My use of old
Is to promise; not bestow.

MAN.

Hast thou not lodged other men?

WORLD.

Yes; but *where* thou knowest not.

MAN.

Think'st thou that their happy lot
In thy palace 'scaped my ken?
Me, too, shelter in it then;
Since thou seest with what gloom
Night's dark shadows round us come.

WORLD.

Good. Come in, see here thy cell;
For I in king's house to dwell
Promise—but bestow a tomb.
(*Raises a flagstone, which discovers an open grave, and vanishes.*)

FREEWILL.

Fine attention!

MAN.

Woe! alas!
Ah! how mighty and how strong
Terrors unto death belong!
Must I lodge me in this space?

LUCIFER (*entering*).

Yes; see here thy dwelling-place:
Enter it.

MAN.

Ah me! but how
Couldst thou tell me then, e'en now,
That thou here didst pleasures seek?

LUCIFER.

So I did.

MAN.

Such lies why speak?

LUCIFER.

Why my word believedst thou?

MAN.

It was not the truth then?

LUCIFER.

Nay:
Nought but lies and vanity.
Had it been the truth, then I
No such thing had willed to say.

MAN.

Though 'twas shadow, why not stay
For at least a shadow's hour?

LUCIFER.

Why? because a fading flower
Is vain pomp the world adorning;
Which has scarce unclosed with morning,
Ere it shrinks 'neath night's chill power.
'Twas this frailty of its state
Moved me such a gift to proffer;
Couldst thou have enjoyed such offer
I had sought another bait;
For, so deadly is my hate,
That to give man guiltiest joy
Doth my very soul annoy;
Thus by pain, so oft I can,
Sooner will I ruin man
Than by pleasant thing destroy.
Now, that from these comrades parted,
Erewhile walking by thy side,
With them thou hast lost thy guide,
And from out thy right course started,
Desperate henceforth, weary-hearted,
Look no entrance more to have
Through that gate that opes to save;
Since now, pilgrim gone astray!
Thou canst find no other way
But one leading to the Grave."[1] (*Exit.*)

This striking scene leaves the unhappy pilgrim all but desperate. He desires to retrace his steps, but cannot. Freewill (enchained by evil habits) stands powerless beside him; and he sorrowfully owns that he could destroy, but cannot save himself. He cries to Love for

[1] "El Año Santo de Roma."

aid. His call is heard and answered. One divine grace after another reappears, and by their joint efforts he is lifted from the pit into which he had fallen, and rescued from the Evil One and his two powerful allies; defeated through their own premature exultation at their victory.

Another fine allegoric *auto* is that entitled "The Great Fair of the World." Here the father sends out his two sons, each to lay out his intrusted talent in the fair. Whichever spends his best is to be rewarded by the hand of Grace. Guilt, the discarded first love of both brothers, follows them in disguise to try and win them back. One son takes Innocence for his attendant, the other Malice. The first chooses rugged, the second flowery paths; the first detects Guilt, however cunningly hidden; the second falls readily into her snares. The good elder brother keeps Innocence with him (though not easily) through the varied temptations of the fair. Inclined for a moment to buy Pride's rich robes, he rejects them for the garment of Humility; the mirror offered by Self-Knowledge, and the haircloth of Penitence, find in him a purchaser; and when he turns his back on the glittering booths and uproarious merriment of the fair, and returns to his father's house, it is that he may be there united to Grace for ever.

But the foolish younger brother lays out his precious talent in buying the wares spread before him by Pride, Lust, and Gluttony. He is indeed startled for a moment when he finds that he has lost the gift which Grace bestowed upon him; but his compunction does not last long. Guilt mocks at Penitence and her goods, and he leaves them. She tells him that he is too young to think of death, or hold converse with Self-Knowledge;

and he agrees with her. At first the pert and forward waiter of the wayside inn, then the shopman of Pride, again the leader of the blind man (Appetite) in a group of beggars, and lastly, dancing among a company of gitanos, Guilt's basilisk eye is seen by the spectator steadily fixed upon her victim throughout the *auto*. The scenes amid which she moves are gay and various as are John Philip's pictures of Spanish manners; but on the purchases of the stroller, whom we watch as he moves from stall to stall, tremendous issues are hanging. He is expending his all; and his bargains cannot be cancelled. His last and most fatal one is when he sets the final seal to his doom, by buying Guilt, the dancer, at the hands of her gipsy master. He returns with her to his father, who disinherits him; and he awakes to the awful consciousness that the slave, whom he bought for his diversion, must now abide with him as a tyrant and tormentor for ever.

2D BROTHER.

"Wretched am I in my woe,
Nowhere can I comfort find,
Who have lost, with careless mind,
The rich talent to me lent.
As upon the wind 'twas spent,
Nought I reap save mist and wind.
Have I now no company?
Must I with this slave be pent?

GUILT.

Yes; for with thee still I went
Then, and now, thy Guilt to be.
When thou spak'st with Gluttony,
I, to spur thee on, stood there;

I stood by, too, when Lust fair
Gained thy heart and bended knee;
There I was when thou to Pride
Gav'st thy talent; and, again,
When thy faithless heart, profane,
Christ's great Sacrament denied;
There when thou thy seeming slave
Purchasedst, while Pleasure gay,
Walking by thy side brief way,
Led thee, thoughtless, to thy grave,—
So come thou with *me* to-day.[1]

---

[1] "El Gran Mercado del Mundo." Another of this class, and one of Calderon's best *autos*, "The Great Theatre of the World," would have been described here had space permitted. Readers curious in the matter will find an excellent account of it, with very beautiful versions, accompanying Archbishop Trench's similar delineation of "Life's a Dream"—a work already referred to with gratitude, which, if now out of print, cannot long be suffered so to remain.

CHAPTER XII.

CONCLUSION.

THE typical examples presented in the foregoing chapters will give the English reader some notion of Calderon's many-sided genius; although, at least, each of the plays referred to must be read throughout before it becomes possible to measure their author's fertility of imagination, quickness of resource, unrivalled skill in construction, and wealth of metaphor; while his beauties of diction, and his remarkable sweetness of verse, can only be enjoyed by a perusal of the originals in Spanish. Calderon's claim to be reckoned one of the greatest of lyric, no less than of dramatic poets, will be allowed after such perusal; and be yet more fully confirmed by more extended researches,—especially among his *autos*. His tropical richness of hyperbole can only be fully estimated after a survey of passages, the shortest of which is too long to be quoted *in extenso* in a work like the present;[1] and which have therefore (if mentioned

[1] It is shown on a small scale in speeches like the one quoted in Chap. iii. from "To-morrow will differ from To-day."

at all) been only briefly indicated. His method of returning again and again on an idea (as, for instance, in the speech of Beatrice in "The Love of Gomez Arias") —amplifying, enlarging, and adding to it each time, till it presents itself as a perfectly rounded whole—recalls, like the characteristic just named, eastern riches rather than western frugality, and has therefore only been exhibited in a fragmentary way. On the other hand, for reasons already stated, his characters have not received here such scanty justice as might have been apprehended from the narrow space provided for their display. The only figure in his stock repertory passed over in silence has been that of the *gracioso*, or buffoon; not that he is not (curiously enough, particularly in the religious plays) an amusing personage, but that, besides never equalling Shakespeare's clowns, even when their fooling is least excellent, some of Calderon's best—such as Escarpin in "The Two Lovers of Heaven," with the long stories he insists on telling, in and out of season—would have required a larger canvass than is used here.

Thus, in spite of inevitable deficiencies, it is hoped that even these few pages, culled from so many, may give some notion of that striking portraiture of a national character rather than of that of individuals, which is the true business of Calderon's drama—an ideal portraiture, of course, but that of an ideal for which the poet looked (as Latour well says) "to that heroic past, of which the age in which he lived was the continuation, if weak and pale, compared with the vigour of those earlier times. He painted the manners of his contemporaries; but to those manners he restored the energy of the preceding

century. For Calderon never forgot that the parents of his audience had known 'Don John of Austria,' and he depicted the present, with eyes firmly fixed on the past, with all its grandeur."

For fear of wearying some readers, less than others might have desired has been here said about the *autos*. Properly speaking, these require a volume to themselves. They are the most unique, as they were the most cherished, productions of their great writer's genius. Little as the Protestant Schlegel could have approved of the one which made Sismondi reproach Calderon as "the poet of the Inquisition," fully as he must have felt the shock which parts of others are calculated to give to all enlightened piety, nevertheless that most competent judge sums up the impression made on his mind even by Calderon's secular drama, and yet more by his *autos*, in these words concerning their writer: "Blessed man! he had escaped from the wild labyrinths of doubt into the stronghold of belief; from thence, with undisturbed tranquillity of soul, he beheld and portrayed the storms of the world. To him human life was no longer a dark riddle. His poetry, whatever its apparent object, is a never-ending hymn of joy on the majesty of the creation. He celebrates the productions of nature and human art with an astonishment always joyful and always new, as if he saw them for the first time in an unworn festal splendour. It is the first awaking of Adam, and an eloquence withal, a skill of expression, and a thorough insight into the most mysterious affinities of nature, such as high mental culture and mature contemplation can alone bestow. When he compares the

most remote objects,—the greatest and the smallest—stars and flowers,—the sense of all his metaphors is the mutual attraction subsisting between created things by virtue of their common origin; and this delightful harmony and unity of the world, again, is merely a refulgence of the eternal all-embracing love."

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